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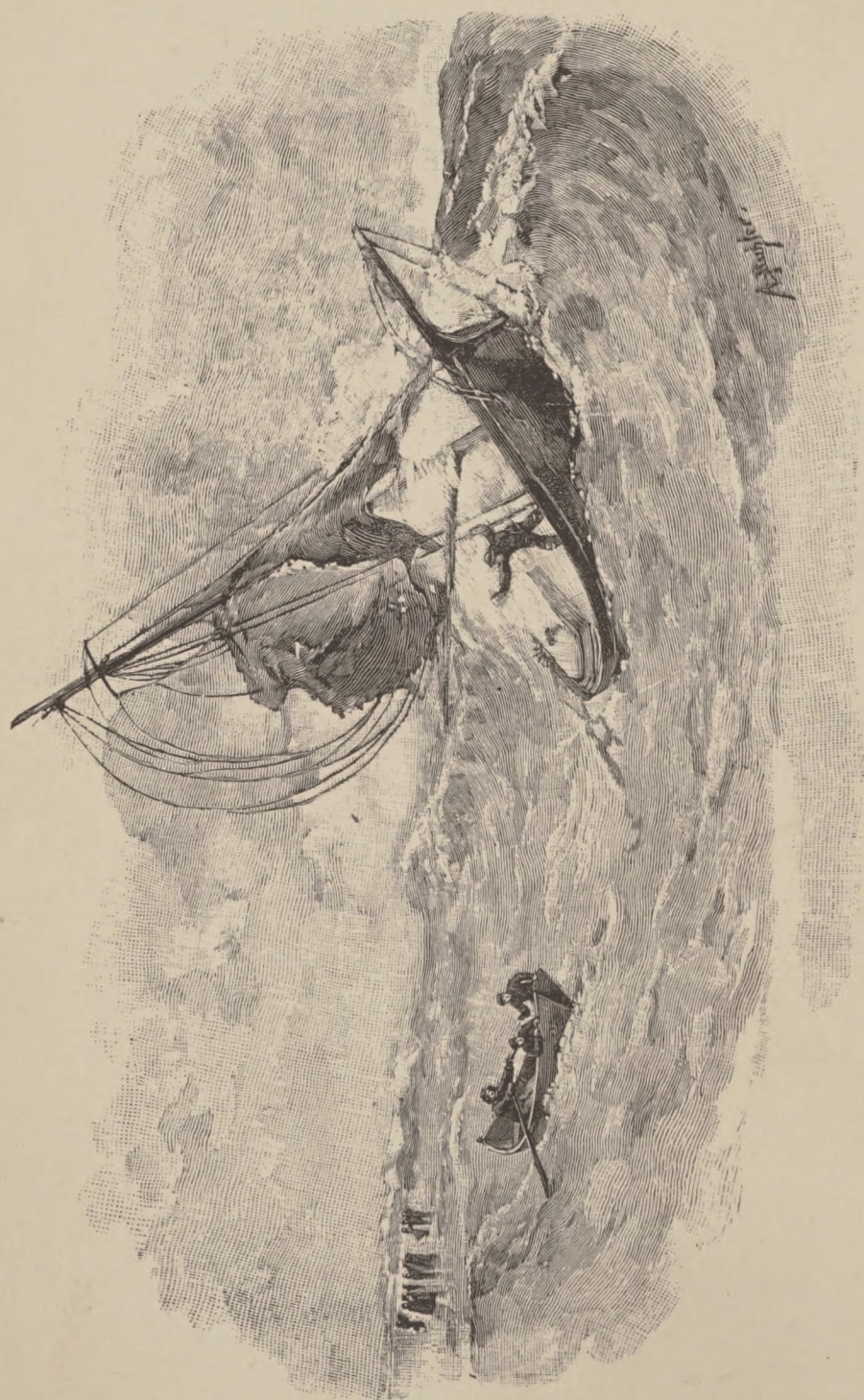
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THE
CAPTAIN OF THE KITTIEWINK



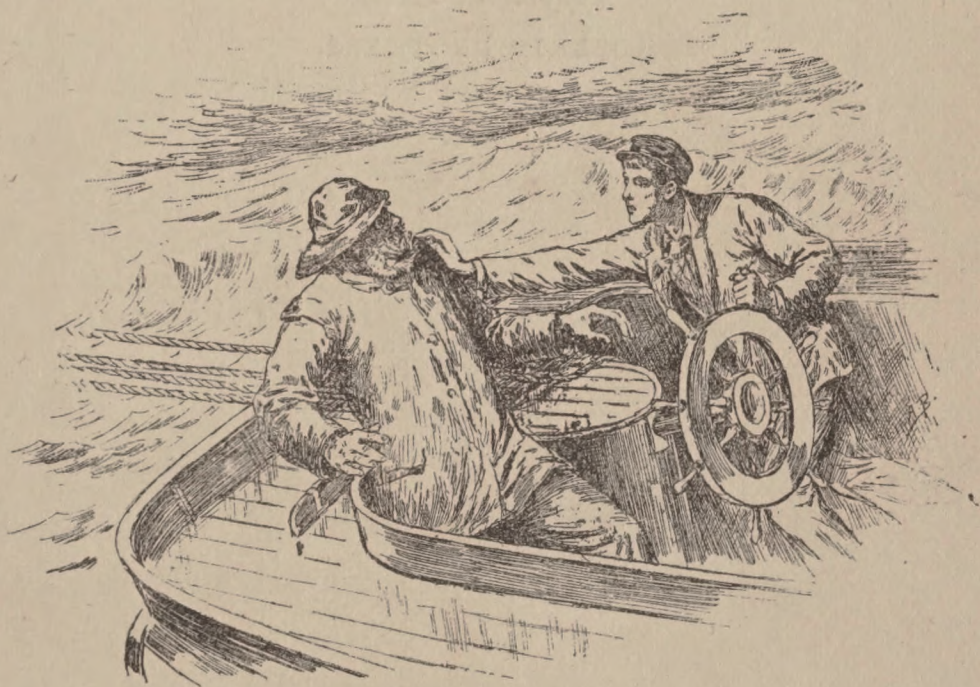
THE WRECK OF THE "KITTEWINK." — PAGE 302.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE KITTEWINK

BY

HERBERT D. WARD

AUTHOR OF "THE NEW SENIOR AT ANDOVER," AND OTHER STORIES



"We'll see if it is n't my boat"

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1892

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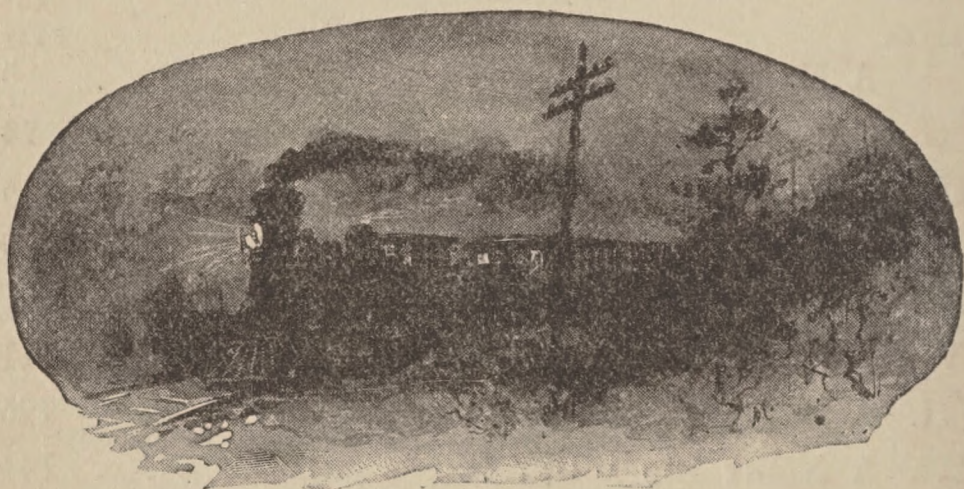


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A LOST HERO.

By ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS WARD and HERBERT D. WARD. With 30 illustrations by Frank T. Merrill. Small quarto. Cloth. Price, \$1.50.



The lost hero was a poor old negro who saved the Columbia express from destruction at the time of the Charleston earthquake, and vanished from human ken after his brave deed was accomplished, swallowed up, probably, in some yawning crevice of the envious earth. The story is written with that simplicity which is the perfection of art, and its subtle pathos is given full and eloquent expression. But noble as the book is, viewed as a literary performance, it owes not a little of its peculiar attractiveness to the illustrations with which it is now adorned after drawings by Frank T. Merrill. — *The Beacon*.

ROBERTS BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
BOSTON, MASS.

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THE
CAPTAIN OF THE KITTEWINK.

CHAPTER I.

A MOMENTOUS DECISION.

“BUT, *Doctor!*”

“But, Madam!” Dr. Plaster leaned forward persuasively, and regarded Mrs. Maynot with the authority of an intimate family adviser, and of a medical friend.

“No, Doctor, I couldn’t stand it. Such a separation would be too cruel, and I’ve just nursed him through —”

“Tut, tut, tut, wife!” interrupted Mr. Maynot, with a caressing motion. “What’s the use of calling in a doctor if we don’t follow his advice?” Then turning with an air of exaggerated deference to the doctor:

“So you recommend a trip to China and back? Professionally speaking, you think that such a sea-voyage will set the boy on his feet?” Mr. Maynot leaned back upon the sofa and stole his arm around the waist of his wife, who was now sobbing profusely into her handkerchief.

“I don’t mind anything else but the cruel, *cruel* sea!” Mrs. Maynot gulped down her tears as well as she could, and faced her imperturbable friend: “If you only had *one* son you would n’t send him off thousands of miles on the — the *waters*!” She brought out the last word in a tone implying that she had reached the climax of human horror. Her voice had the cadence of a litany, as if she said: “From sea-serpents, sharks, collision, fire, and wreck, Good Lord, deliver Harry!”

Dr. Plaster, who had seven motherless boys, all of them in strapping health, and two in college, felt for the first time that

the lady before him had some right to her excessive anxieties. Harry was her only child, and he had just recovered from his third attack of the measles. This classic disease had left him good for nothing. He could not study; what was more, he did not play. Add to this the fact that he had shot up like a weed during the last year, and was five feet eleven and a half inches tall, and sixteen years old, — and one can easily picture a lad who looked more like a very large clothes-pin than a real boy. Perhaps we should say a broken clothes-pin, for he had the stoop of the shoulders that comes so naturally to boys who outgrow their age and are ashamed of their height.

The Maynots lived in the thriving New England village of Sweet Fern, and were what is called “well off,” but not rich people. This problem of a sick boy and a sea-voyage was a serious one to the family. Mrs. Maynot’s only experience of the At-

lantic was a trip from New Bedford to Falmouth, when the steamer "Ponopanset" struck a fog, a tide-rip, and a rock at the same time. That memorable occasion had curdled a natural aversion into horror. Mrs. Maynot regarded the sea as the greatest enemy of mankind; the Father of Evil was nowhere beside it. Mr. Maynot, though he had no particular trust in the salt water, had a great deal in his family doctor. But how deprive a mother of her only son against her will, and in face of an inborn, unmanageable, mortal terror like this? With a rueful glance at the doctor, the perplexed father said gently, —

"All right, Molly. Don't worry! What shall we do about it then?"

"Now, be a sensible woman, Mrs. Maynot," broke in Dr. Plaster; "your son won't be worth a pound of pickled herring unless he has ozone to breathe. Ozone does n't grow in an asparagus bed, — it's to be found

on the salt water. The boy has *got* to go to sea, and not step his foot ashore for three months at least, if you want him to be worth his keep. You are not going to stand in the way of his health, all on account of a sentimental whim?" Then with an admirable feint of anger the doctor breathed his final argument: "I resign the case, Madam. Madam, I resign the case unless I am obeyed."

Mrs. Maynot sat gasping at this terrible threat. Without Dr. Plaster, how could life continue? An uncertain rap at the library-door brought the little group of troubled people to sudden self-possession.

"As I was saying," began the doctor, composedly, "the cranberry crop will be the best —"

A tall, awkward boy walked slowly into the room, looking inquiringly from one to the other. In one hand he held a city morning paper, in the other he carried a

diminutive terrier, who immediately barked at the doctor with the air of a dog who had been in search of an occupation for some time, and had now found one entirely to its mind.

“Harry, my son, can’t you speak to Dr. Plaster? What are you looking so glum about? Has Trot eaten a pullet; or have you lost the quarter I gave you this morning?”

“Well, my boy.” The doctor came forward and stood opposite his patient. He lifted one fat hand to the boy’s shoulder, while Trot, the terrier, tugged vociferously at the flap of the medical trousers. “What a tall fellow you are getting to be! But you need color and flesh. Do you hear? Flesh, sir, and color, sir! I’m going to send you to China!”

Hal’s mother was looking hard at the pattern of the ingrain carpet. She was very pale, and did not see the glance of

bewilderment that her son gave her. The doctor had boldly broken ground.

“Yes, my son, the doctor is right. We must send you off somewhere: but it may be not quite so far as China. We have decided that your health requires sea air.” Mr. Maynot spoke firmly; but he looked apprehensively at his silent wife.

“Why, Father! You don’t mean me to be a sailor, do you?” One cannot say that there was much dismay expressed in the boy’s tone. Like a thousand youngsters, he was crazy over what he knew nothing about, and looked upon a life on the ocean wave as the ideal of manly adventure.

“Well, not exactly a real sailor,” answered Mr. Maynot, with a twinkle of his eye. “I don’t think your mother would allow you to ship less than a captain!”

“A captain! I a captain!” The boy flushed. He failed to catch the joke. “Why, Go Gresham, you know, is captain

of a forty-footer. His father owns it. He told me this morning that he knows every harbor on the American coast. He is going to race this summer. He says it's lots of fun." Hal hastened to explain, "It is n't like horses, you know. Boats are different from horses."

During this naïve speech Harry showed more animation than he had for months. Mrs. Maynot looked at her son sadly enough. Where did *her* boy get this terrible passion for the sea? But Dr. Plaster laughed at the boy's last ingenuous plea, and said cheerfully,—

"He'll do, Mrs. Maynot. Your boy'll do!"

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Hal, helplessly. "If Mamma were willing, I should like to go to sea. I wish Father owned a boat. I'd be captain pretty soon."

He patted the newspaper as he spoke, with a tender motion, and looked rever-

ently at the page of advertisements, from which after a moment's hesitation he slowly read in a loud, high key, —

For Sale, the stanch, safe cruiser “Kittiewink,” just thirty feet on the water-line. This yacht is not a fast and fancy plaything, not a mad beauty, but a safe boat. The anxious mother may sleep peacefully with her son on board. The “Kittiewink” is fully found. Her sails are not too large. This bargain does not ship water every time a zephyr ripples the sea. Come and see her with your pocket-book in your hand. The wise man will buy at sight. She lays off the ferry landing in Marblehead. Owner always aboard. Address Ditto, P. O. Box 2222.

When Harry had read this breezy item he heaved a deep sigh like an expiring north-easter. He looked wistfully at his father and the doctor. He did not glance at his mother, but her trembling voice broke and filled the silence.

“Oh, no, Doctor; anything but a crazy, capsizing boat that will go to the bottom as

soon as you look at it. You may leave the room, Harry, my son; you have frightened your mother enough for one morning."

"Come, come," pleaded the doctor, "don't be hasty, Mrs. Maynot. Madam, don't be hysterical, whatever you are! I'll abandon *your* case too if you act this way. How do you know but the boy has got hold of the very thing? I'll go halves and send my Algernon along to keep Hal company. Listen to reason, now! Isn't the Massachusetts coast better than China? Isn't a safe harbor every night better than the roaring sea?"

"Yes," admitted the boy's mother, faintly; "but —"

"Isn't a cod better than a man-eating shark? Isn't a shore breeze better than a Simoon, or a Monsoon?"

"Or a Typhoon, or a Jib-boom?" put in Mr. Maynot, anxious to help the argument. His nautical ignorance was too profound for him to appreciate his own joke.

“Would you rather,” proceeded the doctor, inexorably, “go months without hearing from your boy, or be able to get a telegram every night to sleep on? Here is his health and your comfort assured, madam.”

A few faint *buts* responded to this onslaught, but Dr. Plaster saw that the day was won. Mr. Maynot, who had sat plunged in thought while the doctor and his patient's mother were having it out, grappled the opportunity by the horns, and said quietly, but very quickly, —

“Hal, send the man to me immediately.”

“The only thing needed is a safe and responsible sailing-master,” mused the doctor.

“It is impossible to find the man I could trust my son to,” said Mrs. Maynot.

“I have sent for the man you want.” Mr. Maynot spoke courageously.

In leisurely response to his master's summons, a middle-aged man walked into the room: he had a distinct, nautical shuffle.

The red handkerchief tied in a sailor's knot over his bare throat, his disregard of suspenders, a habit of wiping his mouth with his shirt-sleeve as he talked, and above all, piercing eyes set deep beneath heavy brows, betrayed the fact that Phin, the gardener, was no less a distinguished personage than Captain Phineas Scrod, at one time skipper of a fleet Grand-banker, late master of a famous coaster, and ex-captain of the stanch brig "Susan Jinks." This sturdy old sea-dog, like many another of his kind, after following the sea for forty years, and knowing every rock and anchorage on the eastern coast as well as you do your back garden, had settled down to hoeing and weeding as contentedly as a woodchuck in a lettuce bed. Harry stood behind his father's gardener in a shivering ecstasy of anticipation.

"How long is it, Phin, since you gave up the sea?" Mr. Maynot opened the subject promptly.

“It’s five year, come next twenty-seventh of October, sir.”

“Do you think you have forgotten how to handle a boat?”

With inexpressible sarcasm the reply came slowly: “When you forgit ter spell Can, I’ll forgit to box my compass. I ain’t given ter boastin’, but I can steer a ship from Salem to Fernandina with me peepers shet all the way.”

“Put the paper on the table and leave the room, Harry,” said Mr. Maynot, firmly. “And you, my dear, had n’t you better look after the boy a few minutes? — the doctor and I want to have a few words in private with Captain Scrod.”

“Where is Phineas?” asked Mrs. Maynot, suspiciously, at supper-time. Her eyes were red, but her lips had taken on the sweet, feminine curve of resignation, which we see in tender but conscientious

women, when duty and distress fight for the mastery.

“My dear,” said her husband, gently, “he has gone to Marblehead.” He did not raise his eyes from his plate.

“To answer the advertisement?” cried Harry.

“Yes.”

“To buy the ‘Kittiewink’?”

“To examine the ‘Kittiewink,’ with instructions to buy if she is a suitable boat.”

“Oh, Father, Father! How much?”

“I told him he must keep within six hundred dollars. The doctor will halve the expense and send his Algernon, my dear,” added the uncomfortable father, deprecatingly.

“*Henry!*” cried Mrs. Maynot, “as if I were thinking of the *money!*” But then and there, to the unutterable surprise of her husband and her son, Mrs. Maynot wiped her eyes and said quietly: “Well,

if it is *settled*, I must make the best of it. Now let us talk of something else — while we can.”

Two days of great anxiety passed. Phin had disappeared without a word. Hal nervously weeded his father's garden, assisted by Non Plaster, and Trot the terrier, who wishing to help his master, invariably pulled up the peas and left the weeds. On the morning of the next day a postal card, liberally blotched with ink and scrawled as if by the antennae of a squid, came with the mail. This was handed around the family with much interest and curiosity. It was unanimously deciphered as follows: —

Baut the “Kitiwink” for 487.50 cents. Will sleep on bord to-nite, and begin fixin her up. i think she a bargane and a dandi.

CAPTAIN SCROD.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST BLUNDER.

“YOU’LL have to get out here. I can’t go no further.”

The driver brought his carriage up with a jerk before a ditch. He was in a narrow street flanked by dingy houses on both sides. Within the hack five persons were closely huddled, and there peered out of the windows six faces, if we may count the intelligent countenance of a gray terrier. This passenger divided his time between barking ferociously at the driver and chewing the shawl-straps. The outside of the vehicle looked as if the party were bound for Turkey, at least. Strapped to its back were a saratoga (extra size) and a canvas steamer-

trunk; while packages and bags enough for a year's tour loaded the driver's seat.

Mrs. Maynot looked around in undisguised disgust. Where was the dreaded Atlantic? She shook her head at the driver, who was now opening the door. "Have n't you made a mistake? Perhaps this is n't Marblehead! Where is the water?"

The coachman grinned. "They're layin' it down in the streets, mum, and ye'll have to walk to the landin'. First turn to your left, down hill."

But Algernon Plaster and Harry Maynot, who had quickly jumped out, and whose eager eyes had been wandering over the narrow streets of old Marblehead, caught sight of an opening between two houses at their left.

"Hurrah! There's the sea! Look at the masts! Where is the 'Kittiewink'?"

Down they dashed. The two fathers followed the boys slowly. Mrs. Maynot brought up the rear in dignified agitation.

Trot, the terrier, followed leisurely, having been delayed by an unsuccessful attempt to swallow the valise.

“There seems to be nobody but the dog and me to look after this baggage,” sighed Mrs. Maynot. “Those men have all gone mad.”

“Goin’ to take all *this* a yachtin’?” asked the driver, irreverently, as he jerked the big trunk over the waterworks, around the corner, down the hill and the gang-way, and upon the bobbing float.

Mrs. Maynot sank down on the heaving landing. She was flanked on all sides by her heaping baggage. Exhaustedly she looked for the fatal boat. Where was Phin Scrod, ex-gardener, now skipper? Why was he not there to meet them? And from the maze of crafts who could pick out the “Kittiewink”? Mrs. Maynot promptly made up her secret mind that a rickety cat-boat in the foreground was the “Kittiewink.”

“How could you?” she cried to her husband. “How *could* you allow this madness? It will kill me! Oh, the horrible water! It is going to my head already.”

The gentle rolling of the float had already laid violent hold of her personal comfort. “It’s as bad as being becalmed in a northeaster,” she protested.

Several mustaches on the float twitched at this nautical remark. The poor woman was too much in earnest to understand that she had been guilty of a North Atlantic bull. She immediately fled to the waiting-room above, which was at least perched on solid rock; nor could she be induced to leave her security, until the time should come to bid her boy good-by, and go miserably home.

The bustle increased about the little group of landsmen. They felt as strange and out of place as if they had been shipwrecked. The ferry-boat steamed up with its usual

importance, and puffed away. Men with gold lace about their sleeves and crossed anchors embroidered in their caps stared at the unnautical party and their baggage with concealed amusement. At last, Harry, unable to stand the suspense any longer, approached one of these grand men, who was just stepping into a handsome gig manned by four sailors.

“Excuse me, sir. Can you tell me which is the ‘Kittiewink’?” Harry waved his hand impressively toward several large yachts flying their pennants at anchor before them.

“Is she a new Burgess?” inquired the gentleman, courteously.

“No, sir, I think not. She is — ah — a fore-and-aft sloop.” Harry struggled with the only maritime term he had learned from his nautical friend, Go Gresham of the forty-footer.

The man laughed outright. He said he

thought perhaps *that* yacht had not come into harbor yet, and with an imperative: "Ready! Give way there!" shot into the labyrinth of yachts, leaving Hal in mute astonishment. It did not take him long to find out that a Burgess boat was called after the name of its famous designer, and that "fore-and-aft" applied only to a two-masted schooner, and never to a "single sticker."

But where was Phin Scrod, the skipper?

"Hullo! Good-mornin' to yer all! Ship ahoy! Is that yourn? All them trunks! Ha, ha! That's a good un on you."

The voice was unmistakable, but how account for this independence of tone? Phin was a changed man. The trim, blue, brass-buttoned suit and the sea air had transformed him from a shuffling gardener to a master of his profession. He and the Maynot family had changed places. Where he once obeyed, he now commanded. His

employer regarded him with curiosity and deference.

“But where’s the yacht?” cried the united family, in a humble yell.

“Avast there! You aint got no *yacht*!” What refined scorn was expressed in that last word! “You own a ship. No teaspoon about her. There she are!”

Phineas Scrod extended his hand loftily. To the amusement of the bystanders, and to the consternation of the boys, he pointed out a black sloop not a biscuit’s throw to the right of the landing.

The “Kittiewink,” some romance writers might have said, “loomed impressively” before them. But she did n’t. There was no impressiveness about her and very little loom. In fact, she was particularly ugly, if viewed by the modern standard of nautical beauty. Her bow rose like a rooster’s beak, fully six feet above the waterline; thence her lines fell abruptly down



“There she are!” — PAGE 30.

towards the stern, so as to give the unfortunate impression of a Chinese junk, as seen in the illustrations of a Physical Geography. This boat was nearly thirty-five feet long and was painted a rough black with a dingy white streak. The mast, instead of being scraped bright, was painted a dull color, whose original tint no expert could opine; moreover, it was set in the deck very far forward. To complete the unyachtlike picture, at the end of her stumpy, black bowsprit was attached what fishermen delight to call "a pulpit," — in other words, a stand arranged with an iron belt, to hold a man firmly while he stood to harpoon the fish. The "Kittiewink" was nothing less than an old sword-fisherman. Any sailor could see that at a glance. The contrast between this boat built for business and the smart pleasure-yachts was severe. The amateur yachtsman might fling a sneer at the homely "Kittiewink." He knew no better.

But the old sea-dog, in spite of her extreme ugliness, recognized in her a depth and beam and seaworthiness that could outstand a dozen fancy playthings or racing-machines of her inches. Skipper Scrod could not have made a better choice for his purpose, had he searched the coast from Portland to Provincetown.

But the boys gazed at the idol of their dreams in silence. They furtively compared her with the trim Burgess beauties flying about the harbor. Who could brag about *that thing* before them? Their pride was shattered as if by dynamite. They even felt ashamed to be on the float. Mrs. Maynot looked at the "Kittiewink" with resigned complacency. One boat was the same as another to her. But Hal actually dropped a tear, while Non swallowed a few more.

Phineas Scrod, who had felt a little æsthetic anxiety about his purchase, ob-

served his young master narrowly, and now took him by the arm, —

“Look here! Don’t do that! She’s a daisy. I tell you she can’t be beat. Here’s something you can count on, and your folks will set easy. She haint so purty as some others, but to my eyes she’s sightlier than the hull lot of ’em about here. She’s built fur sea, an’ these yere yachts are stuck together fur mill-ponds an’ city dudes, an’ wreckin’ an’ drowndin’ passengers, an’ scarin’ their ma’s.”

The two fathers nodded approvingly at Phin’s outburst of enthusiasm, and the boys tried to cheer up. The “Kittiewink,” rude as she looked, was better than no boat at all; besides, there was a difference between five hundred dollars and four thousand, the cost of many a yacht of her size.

But the skipper changed the conversation with the sprightliness of his race, —

“Ye can’t take all this stuff; you’d sink her. Yer boat’s got her ballast in. It’s copper dross, none better. You’ll have to charter a steamer fur them whollop’in’ chests.”

“It’s *got* to go!” called Mrs. Maynot, who had followed the course of events closely from her eminence on shore. “There are his summer and winter clothes, the sheets and pillowcases, the tablecloths,—Dr. Plaster has n’t sent any, he said,—the blankets, the soapstone, the arnica bottle, the hamamelis, and ten jars of strawberries and tomatoes—”

“Yer can’t squeeze that trunk down the man-hole, mum!” interrupted Phin. “I guess we’ll empty it on the float, and I’ll take the necessaries aboard.”

The skipper advanced upon the pile of baggage; and as he came nearer and took in its whole extent, his eyes stared like a lobster’s. He offered no further comment,—the situation seemed to smite him as past

remark, — but he threw a rope authoritatively to Harry: “Here, hold this painter while I chuck some bags in the dory.”

“I don’t see any painter,” said Harry, looking helplessly for somebody with a pot and a brush ready to be held.

“Don’t laugh at him,” said Scrod, politely, looking around the landing; “he haint bin salted, but he’ll learn. Here, *this* is the painter,” shoving the rope into Hal’s hands; “that holds the dory. You hold it; now don’t drop the painter overboard.”

Now Mrs. Maynot would not give up the soapstone and the arnica. These must go. She compromised on the linen sheets and the hamamelis, and reluctantly took them home. The skipper, after a good deal of grumbling, added six life-preservers (which Mrs. Maynot had surreptitiously procured, and which were carefully packed between flannels, sheets, and tomatoes), on condition that they be kept in the locker with the

cod-lines. "The soapstone," he said, "might come in handy as a sinker."

What a delightful bustle there was putting the things in that old craft! It was decided that Hal should occupy the star-board bunk, which means that he was to sleep on the official, that is, the right, side of the boat, reserved for the owner or captain. This pleased Hal immensely. He was very much excited. Before he knew it, the time had come to spread the swinging table with a clean towel for a cloth and red doylies (twenty-five cents a dozen) for napkins. The china was stone, and half an inch thick.

"Two bells! will ye take a little chowder aboard, mum?" roared Skipper Phin to Mrs. Maynot, who was sadly watching them from the shore.

The only answer he got was a faint groan and the barking of a very hungry terrier. But the boys' fathers accepted the novel

proposition with eagerness. Phin had been a ship's cook in his 'prentice days, and judge ye if that chowder was not good! To be busy in the cabin of any boat for the first time carries some sort of an interest with it, and sustains the emotions; but to sit down to eat — ah, there is the test!

“Say, Non! I feel a little dizzy. Isn't it queer?” — this after about two mouthfuls of soup and one of hard tack.

“So do I,” echoed Algernon Plaster, sadly.

Phin winked at their fathers from the forecastle.

“I don't know what is the matter,” continued Hal, with an air as if he had been insulted.

“Neither do I,” seconded Non, with a curious growing dislike to food in general, and to chowder in particular.

“Let's go on deck,” said Hal, apologetically.

“Let's!” with a sigh of faint hope.

So these two future seamen tried to escape their inevitable fate. A sure way to ward off this ominous dizziness is to occupy oneself. This they did. Forward of the mast there could be no disturbing odor of the dinner, and here there happened to be a strange-looking can reclining on a coil of rope with the air of one who did not wish to be disturbed. That was enough to "stump" any boy to disturb it. The can had a handle and a large "K" painted on its top. It looked saucily at them. A rope was tied to the bottom.

"Let's throw it overboard and see it float," suggested Non, eager for the least diversion. "It's tied to the boat. Here goes!" The white can fell with a splash in the water.

"Humph!" said Hal, "I can throw it farther than that."

He uncoiled the rope on the can carelessly; it was caught about a bit, or stan-

chion, at his feet. Then he gave the can a great throw, keeping the farther end of the rope in his hands. Pretty soon he tried to pull the can in. But the rope tugged in his hands furiously. Had a shark swallowed the can? Perhaps he had hooked the sea serpent.

“Something is the matter! It’s pulling,” cried Hal, “catch hold, quick!”

The two boys clung to the rope vainly. The can bobbed in the water and seemed to laugh at them. The rope slipped like the folds of a snake through their unaccustomed hands. There was a mighty effort, a planting of feet, and a final struggle. The two boys were dragged to the very edge of the boat. One more pull, and the rope with an exultant *swish* fell into the water.

What had these bold sailors done? They had simply cast off the “Kittiewink’s” moorings, — that was all. The boat was drifting with tide and wind. They did not

notice her motion at first, nor could they comprehend why the rope had left them. They were dazed by their little exploit. Mrs. Maynot, in the boat-house, was reading a novel to divert her gloom. The skipper and the two fathers had finished the chowder and were contentedly attacking a can of baked beans below. Now the boys began to see what they had done, they were too frightened to tell of it.

“Ship ahoy! You’re adrift. Look out, there!”

This cry, ominous to the sailor, startled the skipper while in the act of administering tomato catsup to a mixture of beans and ship’s biscuit. Never dreaming that the danger was his own, he stuck his head up through the man-hole and looked about. The “Kittiewink” was bearing down on a large yacht not a hundred feet away. Sailors were preparing to fend her off. There was a hubbub at once, — shouts and

running. The two boys were as white as a main-sail. It looked as if the bow of the anchored yacht were going to cut them in two. Phin Scrod jumped as if for his life. It was too late to pay out the anchor. He sprang to the halyards and hoisted the jib.

“Get aft, boy! Stand ready to fend her off! Haul in on that jib-sheet! Down with your wheel!”

“I don’t see any sheet. They’re packed up!” urged Hal.

In his confusion and readiness to atone for his indiscretion, Hal grabbed a life-preserver, the only white thing he saw bearing on the sheet question. But Phin had already made the jib fast. Dr. Plaster by a fortunate accident turned the wheel the right way. The wind blew briskly upon the head-sail, and turned the “Kittiewink” about. The stern of the boat passed under the frowning bowsprit of the large white yacht, grazed it, and escaped; but the dory

that was following astern caught in the schooner's chains, and the painter that bound it to the "Kittiewink" snapped. In a trice, when the danger was over, Phineas Scrod lowered the jib and let down the anchor; and in less time than it takes to write it, the "Kittiewink" was safe.

Then up spake the skipper to the boys:

"Look here, now! you might ha' wrecked her, you might ha' stove her in. Two hundred dollars would n't ha' covered the damages. Don't you boys touch a rope without my orders until ye learn sumph'n, or I'll cast the hull job up. Yer daddies ha' give yer me to keep, an' I'll keep ye or I'll git."

This episode went a long way to establish Phin in the good graces of Mr. Maynot and the doctor, and they prepared to leave the skipper with his passengers quite happily. After one of the canvas-jacketed sailors of the threatened yacht had restored the "Kittiewink's" dory, with sundry racy

words of advice, Phineas rowed the two gentlemen ashore. Trot ran out to meet them with, if I may so express it, the yelp of a martyr. Trot had no novels to pass the time; and the time had been too long for any observing dog to pardon.

“Where are the boys?” asked Mrs. Maynot, anxiously looking up from her book. “This boat-house is as hot as a kitchen on ironing-day. That dog has acted like sancho. Before I take him to Marblehead again, I’ll know it. Where is Hal? Has anything happened? Oh, is he drowned already?” She burst into the easy tears of a nervous, worn-out mother.

“There, there!” said Hal’s father, soothingly. “I told him to stay on the boat. It’s time to go; I thought it would be better—Really, Molly, I thought it would be *easier* for you not to say good-by.”

The novel dropped to the floor of the boat-house. “Trot hasn’t had a mouth-

ful," said Mrs. Maynot, in a trembling voice. One would have thought she was crying for that.

"Nor you either, my dear. I will take you —"

"Henry!" said the poor woman, reproachfully, "Henry, how *can* you? Could I *eat* when my son — my only son —" She choked, gave one glance at the "Kittiewink," and turned her back upon Marblehead Harbor. The two men looked at each other. Neither her husband nor her doctor knew how to treat a mother with a yachting son.

Phineas Scrod was already rowing back rapidly. The "Kittiewink" swung to the wind at her anchor. The two boys waved their caps and yelled, to keep up the general courage. But Mrs. Maynot did not turn. She walked slowly and resolutely away, with her face to the land. She could not bear to look at the "Kittiewink" again.

At this melancholy moment there was a piercing squeak, a splash, and a gurgle. Trot had jumped from the landing, and was swimming madly after the receding dory with half-choked yelps. Not finding the Marblehead boat-house a treasury of entertainment, he had evolved the idea of striking for his dinner with his master. The boys' shouts intensified these convictions.

Thus was another passenger added to the crew of the "Kittiewink."

CHAPTER III.

THE YACHT-RACE.

PHINEAS SCROD was a patient sailing-master. Every day for two weeks the "Kittiewink" sailed out to put the boys in practice; every night she returned to Marblehead Harbor; every day the postal-card, "All safe and awfully jolly," went to Sweet Fern.

This was very uneventful yachting. The monotony of that fortnight was broken by only one exciting incident. Hal and Non furled up Trot in the main-sail one evening, and hunted for him until midnight. Trot, as if thinking that this was the way people go to bed on board a yacht, preserved a heroic silence while his master was searching the harbor and the town for the half-stifled dog.

The boys had begun to tire of all this when matters took a sudden turn, and something happened. In fact, a good deal more happened than they bargained for.

Gopher Gresham, otherwise known as Go Gresham, whose father owned the fast forty-footer "Chimpanzee," was a member of the Neptune Yacht Club of Marblehead, and had come down for the season. Naturally he had hunted out our two young tars, and in a moment of extreme condescension had proposed their names for membership in his club.

To the ecstasy of the boys, who by this time knew the difference between the main-sheet and a dish-towel, they were elected. Their fathers felt no such elation when there was duly forwarded to each a pink bill for fifteen dollars, including initiation fee and annual dues; but, like the necessity for a new road, a new jib, a fresh coat of paint, spar varnish, new halyards, and the

like, the pink bill was counted in as part of the unavoidable luxury of running a boat, and was paid with suppressed murmurs. Mr. Maynot and the doctor reflected that yachting is the most expensive kind of enjoyment in the world.

Both gentlemen had found this out before the "Kittiewink" had been in commission two weeks. The first cost of equipment is slight compared with the subsequent expenditure. You go out fishing, and the galvanized anchor, caught in the rocks, will not come up, and must be cut away; the tender or dory crashes against the wharf or beach and is stove in; the topmast is carried away; the bob-stay snaps; the side that is scraped must be retouched; the bowsprit is smashed by some lumbering craft running in a fog. There are many mishaps like these, preying upon the pocket-book of the inexperienced yachtsman.

Above all, the spirit of rivalry between

yachts great and small, the struggle to keep up the latest fashion of neatness, formality, and equipment, exact money all of the time. Our boys would have been caught in the current of fashion set by wealthy gentlemen, if Phineas Scrod had not proved inexorable. The necessary expenses counted up quite enough.

It was without Phin's knowledge that Hal and Non joined the Neptune Yacht Club, and one fine morning hoisted at the mast-head, to the mortification of the skipper, the signal of the club, designed to represent a red trident vainly trying to fly from a blue to a white background. A quarter of this three-tined instrument had accomplished the difficult feat.

One Tuesday, Hal and Non were sitting in the cock-pit, while the skipper was busy washing dishes with salt water, forward of the mast. Trot, the terrier, was trying to polish his young master's boots with his

pink tongue; at least, he thought he was. The shoes plainly needed blacking. They were of canvas with rubber soles. Trot was not used to what yachtsmen call "sneaks." The boys spoke in whispers.

"How shall we tell him?" said Hal, pointing toward the skipper.

"He'll *have* to do it, if we tell him to," replied Non, his breast swelling with a nautical importance never felt when Phin gave an order.

"I've seen plenty of races. I could manage her. It's easy enough," urged Hal. As he had witnessed only two races off the Neck, which the "Kittiewink" had followed at a respectful distance, Non regarded him doubtfully.

There was a silence. The boys racked their brains. How should they tell the skipper that they had entered the "Kittiewink" in the yacht-race to be sailed the next day, and how persuade him to look favorably upon the plan?

Phin was happy that morning, and sang as he worked : —

“ Oh, Jack, me b’y, is a sailor free,
An’ his ship plows through the white-capped sea.
Oh, Molly, his wife, is a pink-cheeked lass,
An’ she stays ter hum an’ makes apple-sass.”

The boys pricked up their ears. It was the first time they had ever heard Phin sing.

It was a favorable moment, and Non blurted out, point-blank, —

“ Say, Phin, we ’ve entered the ‘ Kittiewink ’ in the race to-morrow at three, and you’ll help us, won’t you ? ”

Phin made no answer. In fact, he acted as if he did not hear. He hummed a while softly to himself. Neither of the boys dared to interrupt his meditations.

The skipper’s voice broke out again, — boisterously this time : —

“ One day, in a voice that his shipmates froze,
‘ Heave her to,’ yells Jack, ‘ fur thar she blows ! ’
But the whale that blew made an end of Jack,
For with the fluke o’ its tail it fatched him a crack.”

This verse was not so encouraging, but Hal persisted, —

“ Say, Phin, did n’t you hear? We are going to race to-morrow at three.”

The skipper smiled scornfully, and without deigning a reply, finished his ballad :

“ Oh, Jack, me b’y, was gobbled at sea
By the fish he was going to stickeree.
Oh, Molly, his wife, grew pale at the gills,
And was carried away by fever an’ chills.”

There was a moment of suspense appropriate to the tragedy. Then the skipper opened his lips and gave utterance, —

“ Do you fellers think that you can out-foot the ‘Choctaw,’ or out-p’int the ‘Gad-fly,’ or beat the ‘Spook’? Can a vessel built to fish in run with one of them racin’-machines, all wings and no hull?”

“ But can’t we start with them and try?” asked Non, faintly.

“ I’ll send Trot after him,” suggested Hal, in a whisper. “ He’s fond of Trot.”

Hal pushed the terrier forward. Trot ran up to the sailing-master, and kissed him persuasively on his left ear.

Phineas patted the dog. His face relaxed.

“I dunno but you can. There aint no law agin it, if your boat is really entered for the monkey-shines. But which of ye two is cap’n? Don’t a member have to handle her in the Neptune races?”

This was a poser. Thus, indeed, ran the rule of the Neptune Club: “The wheel or tiller of each yacht shall be held only by members of the club throughout the race.” How could a boy who had only been at sea two weeks expect to handle a boat in a race? Besides, who *was* the captain of the “Kittiewink”? Phin was the sailing-master, — the paid man. The boat was without a “captain.”

“Let’s draw straws, and let the longest be captain.” Non was always ready to

solve every problem in life by the easiest chances.

“Draw oilskins!” snorted Phineas. “The feller that kin pick out the top’n-lift is cap’n.”

The boys looked at each other in consternation, and retreated from the subject. What new thing was this? Where did it belong? They glanced around and aloft in bewilderment. Non examined each hal-yard and sheet, each spar and sail lazily; but Hal went below. Phin chuckled. He believed that he had outwitted the boys. He felt sure that there would be no race for the “Kittiewink.”

After a few minutes Hal came up the companion-way, and with an unconcerned air approached the rope that holds the end of the long boom to the masthead and prevents the main-boom from dropping on deck. He said quietly, —

“I guess I’ll be captain then; here it is!”

“Wal, I ’ll be split and salted!” said Phineas.

It was not until after the race that Captain Harry could be induced to tell that he had poured studiously over the “Yachtsman’s Guide” until he had found Phin’s test of seamanship, and had committed its position to memory.

So it was decided that the “Kittiewink” should start in the Neptune race. She was to enter the lists against the flyers of the coast, with their pot-leaded bottoms, their smooth sides, their sharp prows, their spinakers and balloon-jibs and club-topsails, and many other sails not useful except for this kind of play. Marblehead laughed at the two mad boys and their uncouth boat.

Next morning Phin Scrod appeared with two rough old sea-dogs, — friends of his, fishermen off a vessel just in. One of them was an old dory-mate of Phin’s in his fishing days. This man’s name was Black

Tarr. Phineas said he "wan't a goin' to race without no talent aboard." Phin, after all, now he was "in for it," had taken quite an interest in this maiden race of the "Kittiewink."

The fishermen made themselves much at home on the little craft, and drank up the lemonade composedly. "What's the odds?" said Hal. He was greatly excited, and would have offered them anything on the boat without a murmur.

But the "Kittiewink" was a temperance boat. Phin Scrod was Grand Chief Pop-of-the-Gun of the Supreme Order of Cold Water Citizens in Sweet Fern; and the boys' fathers had both decidedly said: "Not a drop!"

The first gun had been fired from the bluff on Marblehead Neck. In five minutes the first class were to cross the imaginary line. Half-Way Rock was the first turning-point.

Captain Harry was at the helm. He had practised all the morning, and Phin, sitting next him, put his brawny hand from time to time over Hal's thin fingers to steer a finer course. The only difficulty was that Trot insisted on steering too. When his little paw did not steal under his master's palm, his cold nose did. Trot seemed deeply interested in the science of steering.

"Bless him!" said Phin, grinning, "you'll hev to tie him below. But aint he a sailor though? He haint been sea-sick yet, either. The last pup I took to sea jumped over and drowned himself, he was so sea-sick."

The yachts of the first class zigzagged here and there picturesquely. As far as sails went, all the contending boats were evenly matched. Some had started out with huge club-topsails, but a preliminary "spin" outside decided their masters that the "sky-scrapers" should come down. The wind was pretty high. It had freshened since noon.

The yachts now carried only what are called the working sails, — the main-sail and head-sails. The breeze was unsteady.

“It mought back an’ blow a snorter,” said Black Tarr.

Clouds scudded in different directions overhead. The white yachts careened far over, as puffs of wind struck their sails. What a manœuvring there was for a good position, in order to cross the line between the stake-boats promptly at the second fire! What a calculation of seconds!

The “Kittiewink” was awkward but stanch, and it was decided she should be content to cross the line last. Phin had studied the circular, and knew every inch of the course. The “Kittiewink” had another advantage, besides being stiff and not oversparred; she was manned by three practical sailors, ready for any emergency. Our two very young heroes did not count, — but no one told them so.

A hundred glasses were levelled from the shore at the audacious fishing-boat that dared to compete with the "Spook," the "Choctaw," the "Gadfly," and the "Griffin," the noted flyers of the coast.

"If it freshens up and holds, she may do them up yet," said one expert to another, pointing out the uncouth "Kittiewink" from the balcony of the Neptune Club.

Boom!

"Whew! We're off! There's the gun! Oh, what shall I do?" Harry gasped, as he heard the report and saw the white "Spook" bear away first over the line.

"Now keep cool, sonny!" Phin spoke cheerfully. "Follow them stiddy! That's good. Keep her even. Stand ready to haul on those sheets there, when we pass the line. So; that's good. Make fast! Don't cramp her! Let her go easy. There we are. Now after them! She'll do!"

The "Kittiewink" crossed the line gal-

lantly, the last of the fleet of five; but the knowing ones noticed that she stood up to the wind, shipped no water over her lee rail, and scudded along as well as the rest. The wind was blowing fiercely from the westward, and was heading them off continually with increasing violence. The four white-winged yachts were ahead, tossing badly, and making straight for the first mark.

The three sailors on the "Kittiewink" held a consultation. It was decided to haul in the sheets, and run to the westward as close into the teeth of the wind as possible, so that, as it shifted, they could make their course with it, and so possibly get to the first goal without tacking. Hal knew as little about steering by the wind as by the compass. What was to be done?—for the owner must steer.

"Make for Baker's Island," said Phineas Scrod; "keep her steady, and you'll manage."

Now Harry had never known where Baker's Island was until yesterday; but he nodded with supreme intelligence. The wind continued to increase. Harry fretted when he saw the other yachts nearing Half-Way Rock when he was veering away from it. Non sat behind the wheel at the stern, ready to lend a hand at the main-sheet. He looked a little frightened, but would not have owned to feeling so for the world. The two fishermen were lying flat to windward, while Phin Scrod firmly grasped Hal's hand and controlled the wheel, keeping within the letter of the law of the Neptune Yacht Club.

At this moment a tremendous gust struck the "Kittiewink." The fishing-boat careened far over on her side, and might have shipped some water in her cockpit had not Phin given the wheel a quick turn that sent her into the wind. There was a smash of crockery below, and a squeaking, for which

only Trot could have been responsible. A sheet of spray struck Hal in the face, and made him gasp for breath. He turned away, while Phin grasped the wheel with both hands. Non clung to the main-sheet, expecting to be washed by the board any minute.

“Look!” cried Hal, as soon as he could open his eyes. “Look there!”

The gust had passed on, and the leading white yacht, which had been staggering under the burden of the increasing wind on her enormous sails, was smitten suddenly. Over she went! It was only the lead on her keel that saved her. The mast of the famous yacht snapped at the deck. The glory of the “Spook” withered like a ghost before a bright lantern. Her spotless canvas, her rigging, and her bowsprit crashed together, and were carried into the sea. She came to pieces like an old chair under a fat man. In a moment it was done.

“She’s dismantled, but she’s safe!” cried

Phin. "Here, get into the cockpit, my little cap'n, — you too, Non. There's got to be a man at the wheel, now. I'll carry the 'Kittiewink' through. This is the first an' the last race, an' we'll give it to her. The rest of 'em that are after the 'Spook' 'll bear a hand. Ease the sheets a bit! She'll be stiddier. That's good!"

Skipper Scrod, clad in his yellow oilskins, sat at the wheel, looking grimly now at the coming storm, and now at the sails and rigging. Phineas had an expression of quiet, cautious determination in strong contrast to the do-it-anyhow look of certain of the more enthusiastic members of the Neptune Yacht Club. The boys glanced at their sailing-master and felt safe; and the race was not lost yet.

It was as the knowing fishermen had predicted. "I knew it 'ud fotch 'round," said Black Tarr, triumphantly. As the wind freshened, it headed them off. They

were now steering a straight course for the first mark ; but the other three yachts had not calculated upon so sudden a turn, and were forced to make a tack to fetch the Rock on their starboard.

How the “ Kittiewink ” flew ! Two boats were now nearing the Rock together — the “ Choctaw ” and the “ Kittiewink.” The “ Choctaw ” led the other two flyers by some hundreds of yards. The injured “ Spook ” had dropped an anchor, and would allow no assistance. The dismantled plaything must wait for a tug.

The “ Choctaw,” a stiff boat of the racing kind, was a few hundred feet ahead of the “ Kittiewink ” to leeward, and bearing down upon the rocky island. Half her keel showed gray as she bent far over to the blast. Phineas eyed his antagonist darkly. This was his day for victory, or it would never come again. With the wind only in the luff of the sail, the sword-fisher-

man plowed stolidly after the high-spirited racer.

"She's gaining!" yelled Hal, in a wild excitement of distress.

"Ow! Yow! Let me out!" barked Trot, from the cabin.

"Keep yer jaw shet!" growled Phin, as another blast flattened the "Choctaw" over until her boom swished in the waves.

"Down with the stays'l!" roared the skipper. Relieved by shortened canvas, the "Kittiewink" began to crawl upon her white rival.

Yachtsmen often make the mistake of keeping too much sail spread too long. It was evident that the "Choctaw" was staggering under her load of sail, and thereby losing ground. She dared not stop to reef; she could not, in that blow. She was cramped, and in fact almost dead. If she gave way, she must make another "hitch;" while the "Kittiewink," with small main-

sail, and her diminutive "jumbo," was riding the waves freely, and still forging ahead without shipping a drop over her lee.

But now the two were abreast of the Rock. The "Kittiewink" had closed upon her rival, and in order to do so had come up under her lee. The high waves dashed angrily up the gray cliff, and washed back again in white spray. The wind had grown to a gale. Nearest to the Rock rode the "Kittiewink." The "Choctaw" had an outside position, a few feet ahead. The two boats rose and fell together with the same swell; but the "Choctaw" staggered and rose heavily. Her main-sail, almost a half too large, handicapped her. When she turned on the next "leg" of the triangular course, she could easily beat her clumsy rival running before the wind. Ah, there was the chance for her full main-sail!

Eager to seize every opportunity and to

“blanket” the “Kittiewink,” — that is to say, to cut off the wind from her sails, — the “Choctaw” steered near the Rock. She left too little space for the “Kittiewink” to pass without running ashore.

“Avast there!” bellowed Scrod. “Keep away there, or I’ll tack, an’ cut ye in two!”

A boat under pressure of wind and sail cannot come to a sudden halt, and turn about like a horse and buggy. The situation had suddenly become critical and then dangerous. The Rock was not fifty feet away, and abreast of the “Kittiewink.” The “Choctaw,” the waves, and the gale were forcing her upon it. But Phineas Scrod had not lost himself. Even his quid had not changed cheek. The boys were scared dumb, but not Trot, — he, poor dog, was shut up in the cabin, and barked and wailed madly.

The eyes of the two fishermen blazed,

but they preserved the stolidity of their race, and trusted the man at the helm.

“Hard-a-lee!” roared Phineas.

Phin turned his wheel in the nick of time. The “Kittiewink” spun about like a troubled top. By the usage of the sea, whose laws the “Choctaw” had violated by forcing their rival into this predicament, she had to tack also, or be run down. There was hardly room enough for the “Kittiewink” to pass astern. There was an instant of confusion on board the white cutter. But the boat, cramped under too much sail, and with little headway, refused to come about.

“Out with that main-sheet! Ease the jib! Way off!” shrieked Skipper Scrod, when he saw that the “Choctaw” was unmanageable.

The “Kittiewink” turned square about, and retraced her course, barely passing behind her tossing rival.

“She’s in irons,” said Black Tarr. “I would n’t like to be thar.”



“Hard-a-lee!” roared Phineas. — PAGE 68

“She’s a goner on them rocks. She’ll be match-wood in two jiffies,” said the other fisherman.

“She won’t nuther!” shouted Phin, through the bellowing wind, “we’ll save her!”

At this moment, there came a terrible cry from the “Choctaw”: “Man overboard!”

For the first time Phineas Scrod seemed to lose his self-possession. He started to say “——,” but he did n’t. He had n’t time.

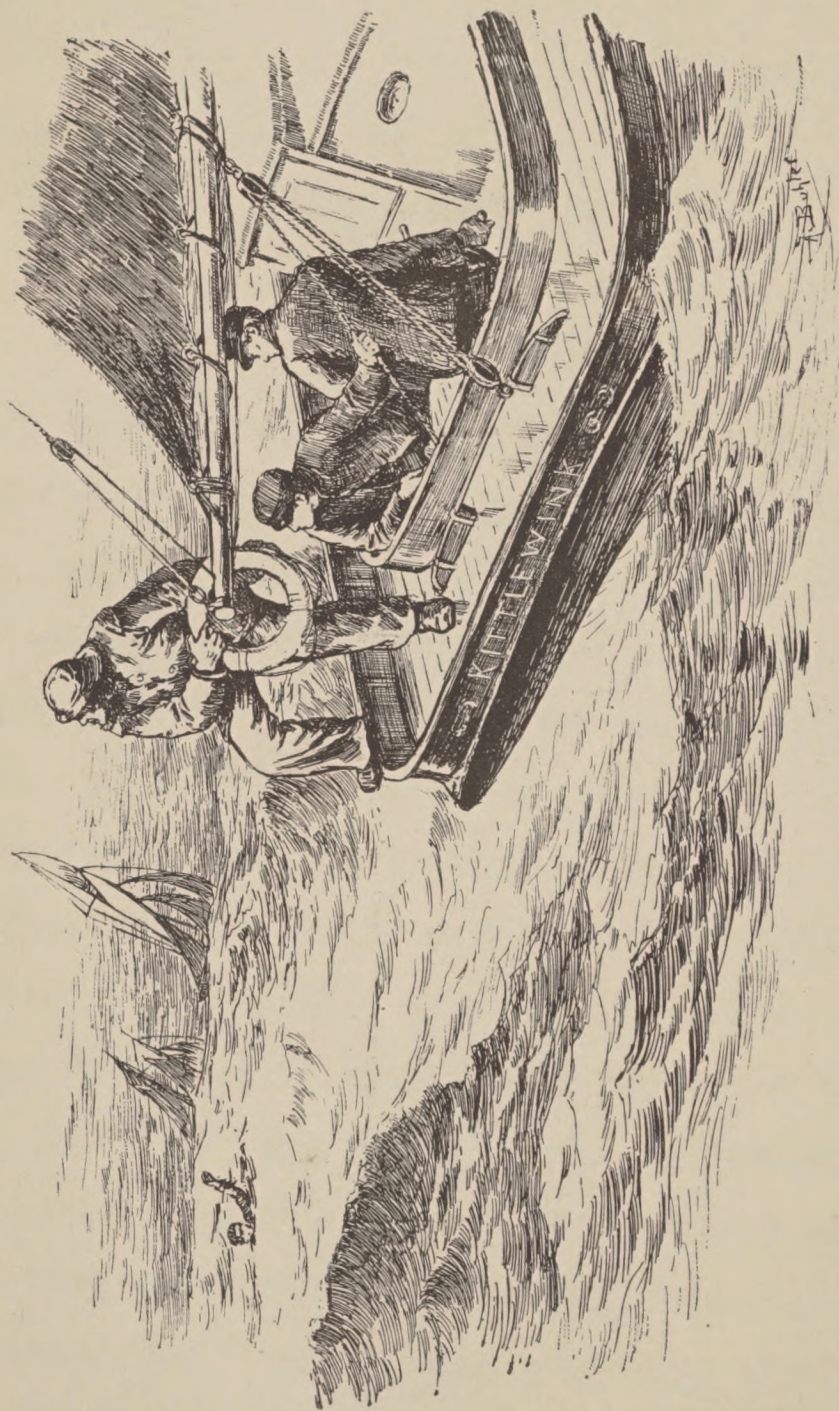
Demoralization had taken possession of the crew of the “Choctaw.” A frantic object was seen struggling in the water. Could that be a man’s head, — a drowning man? How small it looked! Hal shivered with terror. For an instant he turned away his eyes. The white yacht, meanwhile, was drifting rapidly on the breakers.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FINISH.

A YACHT-RACE is not in itself a particularly dangerous experience, nor is the modern yacht necessarily a death-trap. But a full main-sail in a gale, especially when its size is out of all sensible proportion to the boat, is nothing short of madness. The "Choctaw," as many of her kind have done before, was merely reaping the result of foolhardiness. Her owner, in the excitement of the peril, had dashed forward from the tiller to shove the jib to windward in order to bring the boat about, when a lurch sent him overboard. At that moment the "Kittiewink" was passing by the stern of the mismanaged yacht.





SCROD SAVES THE OWNER OF THE "CHOCTAW." — PAGE 71.

“Heave her a line!” shouted Phin, above the wind. “Take the road!”

As he called, he picked up a life-preserver at his feet, — one of those which Mrs. Maynot had smuggled into the baggage, and which had not been relegated to the locker. Long experience had taught Phineas the value of a convenient life-preserver. He stood up and hurled it toward the sinking man. The life-preserver whirled in the air, was carried toward its mark by a gust, and dropped within a few feet of its object. Then the “Kittiewink” came sharp up into the wind. At the same time Black Tarr, obedient to orders, had cast the line from the “Kittiewink” to the “Choctaw.”

“Make her fast for’ard, you lubbers!” shouted the rugged sailor.

Phin, when he saw that the rope had fetched, put his helm hard up. A man on board the yacht had enough presence of mind left to catch the stout cable, and to

make it fast. The "Kittiewink" now pulled stoutly on the dead weight. The breakers snapped after the "Choctaw" with snarls of disappointment, but she turned.

"Let go the road! There she fills!" The flapping jib now bellied out.

"Ease your main-sheet!" Black Tarr hurled this order at the discomfited yacht as it caught its first wind, and bent dangerously to it. She made slow headway. The foam washed back from the rocks upon her stern. Hurrah! She was still safe, and good for a hundred more races.

But where was the drowning man? Evidently he had caught the cork preserver, and had slowly forced his way toward the "Kittiewink," which had again come up into the wind. Phineas Scrod had kept a weather-eye upon the floundering yachtsman. He had done all he could; it was five lives to one. A dripping hand, purple with cold and fright, clutched the gunwale.

The two boys, as pale almost as the face that peered gasping at them, lifted the struggling man aboard. This was quite a nautical feat for Harry and Algernon.

The "Choctaw" meanwhile was already some distance away, and getting clear of the island. The "Kittiewink," having modestly saved a yacht and her owner, stood off again by the wind. Scrod, at the wheel, was grumbling to himself. The two sailors had relapsed into dogged repose.

At that moment, when the new comer had but just reached the cock-pit of the "Kittiewink," the "Griffin" loomed up before them, making bad weather; but she was still in the race, and about to round Half-Way Rock. The crew of the "Kittiewink" had forgotten all about the race.

A yacht-race is seldom given up until it is lost at the last stake-boat. A dozen circumstances may conspire to bring the leading boat in last. It has even happened

from time to time in the history of yachting that a boat has been capsized, has righted itself, been bailed out, and actually won the prize.

At the moment when the "Griffin" came into sight, the racing passion revived, and the rescued owner of the "Choctaw," forgetful of everything else, sprang to the shrouds and signalled his cutter wildly. It did not seem to occur to him that he was just out of the teeth of death.

"Keep on!" he shrieked. "Don't let them get ahead!"

The crew of the "Choctaw" could not hear him, but by the occult power of sympathy divined his meaning. They tacked, and started once more in the race, and to turn the Rock.

"Get down there!" shouted Phineas, pointing at the dripping yachtsman. "Get down below there! Stow away that tongue, and put on some dry togs!"

The young man came aft with a smile of satisfaction on his dripping face. He was hardly a man; he had not yet thought to thank his rescuers in his excitement. It was such a matter of course to save a man in danger at sea.

“Say, Cap’n,” the streaming lunatic approached Phineas Scrod, “you can beat them both. You handle her wonderfully. Keep right on! This is the grandest race of the year. Put her through! Make her sizzle! I’ll take the helm, young fellow,” turning to Hal, who was regarding this wonder with open-mouthed consternation. “If I steer,” he explained, “she’ll win fair. Your man can’t steer in a club-race, you know. You did n’t read the rules, I guess.” He started to take the wheel as if he owned it.

“All right,” asserted Hal, sheepishly. He was awed by this cool piece of impertinence.

“No, you won’t,” growled Scrod, his blood

well up. "Git right down there in the cud an' shet up!"

The owner of the "Choctaw" reluctantly obeyed orders. He was not on his own boat.

"Hard-a-lee!" The "Kittiewink" started again in the race, slightly astern of the "Griffin," but this time leading the "Choctaw." "If ther' aint no tug about," Phin muttered to himself, "I've got to stand ready to pick 'em up as they drop overboard!"

Non turned pale when they came about. Were these the far-famed pleasures of yacht-racing? He would have given his summer's vacation to steal unobserved to the harbor and give it all up. He felt dizzy and sick in the tempestuous sea. It was very rough; but he did the best he could, — he went below. Trot, being untied, took this opportunity to sneak on deck.

Hal, too, was dazed. As the nominal

captain, he tried to keep up a jubilant appearance before the stranger; but the spray struck him in the face and trickled down his neck, and took the romance out of this manly sport. He gulped down his fright, and patted the terrier, who was now shivering and squealing in his master's arms.

Phineas Scrod kept on—it was not wholly easy to say why; but he had a great deal of confidence in the “Kittiewink.” She was built to stand such blows, but the yachts were not. Theirs was dangerous work. Phineas felt as if it would be unseaman-like to desert them.

The three boats were now in bitter competition. The “Gadfly” had withdrawn long ago, but rivalry ran high with those which remained. It was a shame that an old hulk should mock the crack vessels of their class!

The captain of the “Choctaw” now came

up from below, dressed in a dry suit of Hal's. For this reason Trot did not snap at him. The gay fellow did not seem the worse for his ducking. His eyes flashed as he watched the contestants. The "Griffin" was forging ahead; his boat was far behind. Half-Way Rock had been left astern; they were flying before the wind. A stake-boat off Tinker's Island was the next mark, — then for home!

The captain of the "Choctaw" sat down near the skipper, and eyed the "Kittiewink" with envy. How easily she rode the waves! How little she yawed from one side to the other! How bravely she carried her sail! On the other hand, at every roller the "Griffin" heeled to one side, and her boom, longer than herself, dragged with the sail in the water. Then, with a tremendous jerk, she pulled it out, racking the whole boat. Her gaff beat at the spreaders; but it was a good piece of spruce, and it stood the terrible strain so far, well; and what a

strain it was! A whole main-sail, when a double reef would have been almost too much!

There is hardly a more dangerous course than to run full sail on before the wind in a gale. The paid man on board the "Griffin" would have given his month's wages to be well out of it; but the amateurs insisted. Sport is too often blind to peril, and courage is sometimes nothing but ignorance. Besides, it was no slight honor to come in first a day like this.

The wind blew in flaws, each new one more vicious than the last. Suddenly Hal's new yachting-cap blew far off to sea. It was one of the model adopted by the New York Yacht Club, and had crossed anchors embroidered in gold braid, which indicated that its wearer possessed a yacht. It was one of Hal's proudest possessions. Its price was four dollars, and, needless to say, it was not yet paid for. As it flew gracefully

away, Trot, who had been trained to bring his master's hat, eyed it sharply. He knew his duty. He gave a few preliminary yelps, and made a mad jump for the floating cap. In a twinkling he disappeared over the side of the boat.

Hal shrieked. Non was down below, rolling in unutterable agony.

"He's a goner!" said Scrod, curtly.

"But turn around! You must get him! He's my dog! I don't care about the race! I order you to. I'm captain of the 'Kittiewink'!" Hal spoke passionately. Tears welled to his eyes. The poor dog could hardly be seen struggling in the waves.

What the effect of this peremptory command might have been is difficult to say. It was a terrible day, and the unusual kept happening. As Hal stood looking back, stamping his feet, and even attempting to force the wheel from Scrod, the two sailors suddenly jumped up like cats. One seized

the life-preserver, while the other rushed forward to the same coil of rope that had saved the "Choctaw."

What had happened to cause this commotion? Nothing less than the last possibility: the "Griffin" had overturned right before them! A fierce flaw had struck her sails full, and sent her over. The fancy centre-board yacht lay on her side in the water. Her huge, speckless sails were spread upon the waves, and the gale flapped them ominously up and down. The owner of the "Griffin" had advanced notions in yachting; his yacht carried an iron centreboard, but no outside ballast. The lead she had inside of her had shifted. She lay helplessly on her side. What made it more exasperating was the fact that evidently none of the rigging had parted, but the wind had simply forced her down. From under ropes and canvas the surprised crew crawled and clambered upon her upper rail. Her cabin was locked tight.

Had the doors been open, or the skylight unscrewed, she would have sunk like a shot. But with the air in her, and if the wind struck just right under that mass of sail, she might right herself.

In a moment the "Kittiewink" was alongside. Hal was terribly excited; but Non was still too sick below to care who went to the bottom.

"Now, heave her the line! Down with the jumbo!" said Scrod, wearily, as if he had begun to be tired of picking up yachting boys.

The men aboard the "Griffin" seized the rope as well as they could, in a dazed way. They seemed dumfounded by what had happened. The "Kittiewink" drew alongside. There was a general scramble for safety. With a crestfallen air, the two yacht-owners regarded each other.

"Too bad, old fellow!" said the "Choc-taw" to the "Griffin," as he helped him aboard the "Kittiewink."

“Go to thunder!” said the captain of the “Griffin,” gratefully.

They all boarded their black rival, looking like wet seals, and were sulkily saved.

Is it a criminal offence to overspar a pleasure-boat, and send sporting but ignorant young men out racing in a gale, or not? The accidents of the day were not uncommon in the annals of racing. For some yacht to be seriously disabled in a race, when the wind blows half a gale, is the expected thing. To fall overboard is not unusual. But to lose a few spars in a luffing match, or to be completely disabled, as the “Spook” was, excites but small comment, and little sympathy. The owner ruefully pays the bills, and “goes it” again.

In the excitement of the accident and the rescue nobody had thought of the “Griffin” herself. This boat, the pride of the Neptune Club, lay like a wounded albatross, while the sea gurgled and the

wind groaned beneath her outspread wings. What a sad sight it was! The hope of her designer and the envy of the club-boys in such a plight! The "Kittiewink" seemed to sneer at the frail beauty. The "Choctaw" was still laboring far behind. The "Griffin's" six men crowded into the cock-pit of the "Kittiewink." The owner of the "Choctaw" had joined them. One of the "Kittiewink's" fishermen made preparation to cast off from the floundering racer.

"Are n't you going to stand by, and help save the boat?" cried the owner of the "Griffin."

"I would n't bother with that teacup for a thousand dollars," retorted Phineas, contemptuously. "You're plaguy lucky to be out of her so easy. Up with the jumbo! Ease the sheet there, and let her go!"

But poor Trot! What had become of

him ? In all this danger and delirium, who could save a puppy ?

In the confusion, Non made a desperate effort to come up on deck. As he came staggering up, pale in the face, purple of lips, shivering all over, he espied over the stern what looked like a window-washer, drifting towards him. Non was too feeble to speak ; he pointed toward the object. Was it a strange fish ? Hal's eyes followed the direction of his friend's finger. The "Kittiewink" rose and fell heavily.

"Yap, yap ! Yow, yow !" came a feeble cry.

"It's Trot !" shrieked Hal. "Dear Trot ! Phin, if you don't save that dog this time, I'll jump over after him !"

The order to "shove her off" was stayed. Black Tarr deftly took a long oar from the deck, and upon this the desperate dog clung with his fore-legs until he was drawn to the side of the boat.

“It ’s myraculous !” said Skipper Scrod, when the dog was drawn aboard. “None lost this trip, so far. Heave her off !”

Trot fell, a limp mass, into his master’s arms, and if dogs can be said to faint, then and there that dog swooned dead away from exhaustion. Trot, too, had enough of racing that day.

“But,” urged the owner of the “Griffin,” after this episode, “you don’t mean to abandon my boat ? She ’ll right pretty soon, and sail anywhere. Let me aboard !” He struggled to accomplish this object by main force.

“Avast there !” said Phineas, as firmly as though he trod a man-of-war. “Sit down, or I ’ll put ye in irons. Heave that line off there, I say !”

One of the men from the deserted “Griffin” obeyed mechanically. The crew did not seem particularly sorry to leave her. Held in a vise by the two rough fishermen,

the owner of the "Griffin" gesticulated wildly. Peril, disaster, and grief had unmanned him. But as the "Kittiewink" filled away, he stood with his arms folded across his breast in a tragic and Napoleonesque attitude, and surveying the ruin, began to anathematize his boat, her designer, her builder, the race, the day, his rescuers, the "Kittiewink," and particularly her sailing-master. Responsive to a wink from Scrod, the brawniest man, who happened to be Black Tarr, stopped the young gentleman's mouth with a hand whose palm was none of the softest and sweetest.

"I'm willin' to save human lives," said Phineas, charitably. "I'll save tom-fool boys; but to save tom-fool boats, that aint what I'm here for."

When the "Kittiewink" was distant about a quarter of a mile from the scene, and while seven pairs of staring eyes were following the floundering motions of the

abandoned yacht, the "Griffin" rose with a sudden lurch. A gust had struck under her outspread sails. She righted herself, and dashed tipsily here and there on her unpiloted course. Her owner uttered a deep groan. But it was noticed that the "Choctaw" made for the derelict, and thus gave up the race:

"We'll go the hull course an' win," said Phineas. No one reproved him for this pardonable exhibition of vanity.

The day and the gale had done their worst. With another shift of the wind the rain settled in, and with her rivals so well represented on board, the "Kittiewink" finished the course of the Neptune Club regatta on the 16th of June, in the worst weather found in the records of the Club. As she rounded the bluff and passed the stake-boats, a salute of the gun pronounced her the victor. There were a hundred hurrahs for her unparalleled per-

formance. But many anxious faces looked seaward for the missing yachts. Skiffs and dories rowed out to the "Kittiewink" to learn the particulars of this memorable race, and carried its wet and sullen guests ashore for a good cheering and drying. They deserved a good spanking.

The excitement in Marblehead ran high when it became known that the "Choctaw" had finally captured the wandering "Griffin," and that the "Spook" was still waiting for a tug. Never had there been such a series of narrow escapes. It was a rare combination of chances that brought the successive catastrophes about, but some yachtsmen shook their heads, and admitted that the same thing might happen again. Where were the builder's art and science, when a Cape fisherman could beat such crack yachts?

In view of the "Kittiewink's" gallant conduct, and of the tact and heroism of

her sailing-master, the fact that Hal had not steered his own boat throughout the course was overlooked. Late that afternoon Hal and Non went over to town. They were too bruised and tired to go to the Neptune Club. They went straight to the office of the Western Union. In the elation of the brilliant achievement of the "Kittiewink," whose credit Hal, in this crisis, took upon himself as captain, he sent a telegraphic message ("collect") to Sweet Fern, announcing his safety and victory.

This despatch troubled his family exceedingly. Mr. Maynot, thinking that no time should be lost, sent the following explicit message in return, — which, however, was not delivered that night : —

If you sail another race this summer, Phin will be dismissed, the boat sold, and you apprenticed to a carpenter in South Dedham.

HENRY MAYNOT.

CHAPTER V.

A WOMAN ABOARD.

THE morning after the yacht-race the two boys did not wake up until half-past seven o'clock. They had slept half an hour over their usual time. The curtain was still down that separated the cabin from the forecastle, where Phineas Scrod slept in his narrow bunk. Brimful of the excitement of yesterday's triumph, the boys for once forgot their breakfast. They began to chat in whispers. Non and Hal had bunks opposite each other. These were wide and cushioned. Trot slept at Hal's feet under the blanket. The boys leaned on their elbows and eyed each other like conquerors. The nautical clock struck the bells.

“Seven bells. Sh-sh! Phin’s asleep,” said Hal.

Non leaned forward and peeked through the curtain, and nodded.

“The next race is Saturday,” observed Hal, after an authoritative pause. “I suppose they’ll make us enter. The fellows at the club last night, you know, said that the ‘Kittiewink’ proved herself the best boat in her class.”

Non assented with a grave inclination of the head, as if he bore the honor of the Neptune Yacht Club upon his shoulders.

“But what’ll Phin say?” he ventured.

“Look here, Non,” answered Hal, unconsciously raising his tone, “Phin might as well understand, now as ever, that he is our paid man, and that what I order him to do he’s got to do.”

There was a soft sound behind the curtain which might have been a suppressed chuckle; the boys did not notice this, they were too absorbed.

“What will Father say? Do you think that your mother would like it?” asked Non, doubtfully. “Besides, we’d have to have a racing crew. I don’t believe we could afford that yet.”

This practical suggestion elicited another sound from behind the curtain, and at the same time caused Hal’s face to droop fully twenty degrees at the corners of the mouth.

“But,” he insisted, holding doggedly to his point, “even if we don’t race next Saturday, Phin must not be —” He halted, wondering what to add, while Non looked interested but still doubtful. At last, the captain of the “Kittiewink” found the word he was after. He had heard his father use it often, — “insubordinate,” he said with gusto. “No, I cannot allow that in my man.”

Hal sat up in his bunk with an assumption of unflinching authority. His long lean body was ridiculously out of proportion

to the sentiments he expressed. Perhaps he felt it.

At that moment the curtain was wrenched aside, and Scrod, looking stolid and responsible, confronted his captain.

“Mornin’, sir.” He stood in a red-flannel shirt of scant proportion, bowing low, and with mock deference touched an imaginary hat in true coachman’s style. Hal and Non at any other time would have burst into a roar at the grotesque sight; but they had been caught in their presumptuous words, and trembled at the righteous indignation that they knew must follow. “Please, sir,” said Phin, with another mock bow, lower than the first, “may I get my close, sir?”

“Why, yes — that is — of course,” stumbled Hal. He turned very red.

“Thank ye, sir,” replied the skipper, ducking his head like a china mandarin; “and might I put ’em on? Thank ye kindly. Bean as it is, I can’t do nothin’ but what

I'm told ter, may I be so bold as to ask can I put on my socks too? An' then maybe you'll let me wash up and light the fire?"

Phin's mild little joke was the easiest and perhaps the wisest course he could have taken to shatter the overwhelming nautical pride of the young captain committed to his care. Hal was a manly fellow, after all, and took the hint. But whether he took it hard or not, no one could tell; for Trot interrupted proceedings with a series of growls, followed by a bark which in the barker's estimation might have protected a man-of-war.

"Hullo there! 'Kittiewink' ahoy! Here's a message for you."

Hal bounded to the cock-pit, and with his gray blanket wrapped about him, looking like the son of a digger Indian, he held out his hand for the telegraphic envelope.

"Fifty cents first, young man," said the

messenger, concisely. "I've been hunting creation for you."

"Why, don't you know the 'Kittiewink'?" exclaimed Hal, with great surprise. "We won the race yesterday."

He straightened himself in the sunlight, that shone with inconsiderate brightness upon his extempore uniform, by which the messenger was evidently not impressed. Besides, the duties of his office apparently gave that representative of the Western Union no time to read the sporting columns of the daily press.

"Ye did, did ye?" irreverently observed the messenger boy; then, casting a wise eye at the boat before him, he added, "It's my opinion you'll never win another."

Then Hal in disdainful silence opened the yellow envelope, and read the telegram with whose unmistakable language our last chapter closed. Here was a blow. He felt like rebelling with a big *R*. But he remem-

bered the carpenter in South Dedham, and accepted his fate. Alas! the prophecy of the telegraph messenger had come true too soon. Hal walked way forward and sat down alone with his sorrow and his telegram for a few minutes. Non yelled to know what was the matter, and Phineas said, —

“There ain’t no bad news, are there?”

But the captain of the “Kittiewink” loftily replied: “Can’t you let a feller alone?”

At the breakfast table Hal handed the telegram to Phin without a word. The disappointed lad choked over his fried cunner, as he furtively watched Phin’s face.

“Wall,” said the skipper to himself, after the third reading, “His pa hez got some sense. I hope his ma won’t be skeered, an’ come.” But aloud he said nothing. Phin was not the man to “rub it in.”

By eleven o’clock the “Kittiewink” was clean. No one would have suspected the

ex-sword-fisherman of dissipation to the extent of a yacht-race. On that bright morning, with her high bow, her stumpy bowsprit, and her blistered paint, she looked the most unsophisticated and the demurest vessel in that picturesque harbor. One should except the yacht-club signal, and the ensign at the peak. Beside the "Kittiewink" lay anchored some of the most famous flyers on the coast. These glistening yachts with their shining paint, their brass-work, and their busy crews seemed to scorn their black ungainly rival, just as the lithe, aristocratic greyhound scorns the abler pariah of the streets.

"Hoist the 'absent flag,' Phin, please," said Hal, pleadingly, "as soon as we get into the dory. I always want the absent flag used after this."

Hal had made an important purchase only a few days before. It was a rectangular, plain, blue flag. He brought it aboard in

great triumph, and explained its use to Phineas Scrod. "Now, Phin," he said, unrolling the package, "the other yachts have one, and why should n't we?"

"I did n't know this yere craft were a yacht," observed Phin, with a snort of contempt.

"Whenever I'm gone ashore I want you to put this up where it belongs," proceeded Hal, vaguely.

"Whar's that?" growled Phin, with a slight twinkle in his left eye.

"Why, you know. It goes up with a string," explained the captain, looking helplessly at the adjacent yachts, "on the cross-piece of the mast."

"You mean the spreaders, I guess. How many more monkey-shines hev ye got?" replied Phin, good-naturedly.

"But this is very important. It tells whether the owner is aboard or not."

"Then you'd better hang it out all the

time. He hain't been aboard but onct to my notice," observed Phin, cruelly.

This, alas, was too true. The fathers, not the boys, owned the boat. Who could retort on the skipper? Hal hesitated.

"But to please us," pleaded Non. "It's such fun, you know."

The skipper laughed, and took the blue "absent flag" in his hand, eying it as if it were a counterfeit bank-note. Yet he was evidently relenting. He was proud of the boys, the boat, and her splendid victory. As all Marblehead used them, perhaps in his heart he was proud of an "absent flag." Yachting etiquette is the most insidious of diseases.

"Which one shall I h'ist her for?" demanded Scrod, with a slightly familiar chuckle.

The boys consulted apart, and as a result of their conference Phineas was told to hoist the flag only when both were gone; one

in fact was really as much owner as the other.

Then the skipper put his final poser:

“Now, if one of ye is ashore, an’ the other falls overboard, shall I h’ist the bunt’n or heave a line fust?”

On this morning Phin cheerfully complied with the timid request of his captain. As he observed to his mate, Black Tarr, he did n’t want to be “too hard on cunners like them two.” So the boys stepped into their dory, and watched the blue flag ascend promptly for the first time to the starboard spreader. With swelling hearts they rowed towards their club float. They felt that the marine glasses of the Neptune Club piazza were all directed towards them and the “Kittiewink,” in recognition of the performances of the day before. Never had they felt more independent and more manly. The dismantled “Spook” lay at her moorings near them. Non was about to make

a profound remark about the futility of a racing-machine facing a gale of wind when the "Kittiewink" was around, when a series of steam-whistles made them start.

"Look out sharp there, or you'll be run down!"

The ferry-boat, making for her regular landing at the Neptune float, was upon them.

Before Non, who was rowing, could turn aside, a feminine shriek, more startling to Hal than the angry whistles of the ferry-steamer, tore the air: "Oh, Hal! It's my son! Save him!"

In answer to this cry, the ferry-boat stopped. Its bow grazed the bewildered dory. A deck-hand grasped the little boat. Non, not thinking what he did, handed up the painter. Before the passengers could realize what had happened, the two boys were aboard, and one of them was clasped in his mother's arms.

“Oh,” cried Mrs. Maynot, “that terrible race! I have come down to spend a week.”

The two boys looked at the lady, and then at each other. A significant silence followed. The ferry-boat struck the Neptune float, and while Algernon Plaster took care of the dory, Hal assisted his mother and a huge valise to the trembling wharf.

“Where will you stay, Mother?” asked Hal, a little unsteadily. He meant to be filial; he wanted to be courteous. But the boy was so much disturbed that for some moments he did not succeed in being either of these things. He could bear his mother’s reproaches for what she would call his “awful recklessness;” but the feeling that she came to take care of him he thought he could not stand. He felt mortified before the yachtsmen of his limited acquaintance. To have a woman descend upon him seemed humiliating. His heart faltered. Other fellows were trusted by their women-folk, he thought;

why not he? The struggle in the boy's nature was severe. It seems a little matter perhaps to struggle about, but any boy will understand it. For a time Hal was greatly shaken. To be sulky, to be sullen, to be rude, to rebel, to say, "Mother, why *did* you come?" — this was the first hot impulse. Then Hal began to think better of it. He began to see that his mother had been greatly alarmed, and was suffering. He began to understand what it is so hard for a boy to understand, — the meaning of anxiety and love when both come together in the heart of any one of those unreasonable older people whom a fellow calls his family. His mother's condition appealed to the chivalrous in him: every boy has his full share of that. Hal did not say an unkind word. In that he certainly was heroic.

"Where will you stay, Mother?" he repeated helplessly.

“There !” said she, leaning upon his arm and pointing at the large building above them, that certainly did look like a hotel.

“But, Mother, that is the Neptune Club. It’s my club. Only men go there.” He straightened himself up. Trot, who up to this time had made himself a general nuisance by barking and prancing about his mistress, now got under Non’s heels and fairly tripped him up, — luckily into his own dory.

“Oh, dear !” sighed Mrs. Maynot. “The first thing that greets me is a shipwreck. I will go over there, then,” she added, when she found that Non was not drowned. As she spoke, she pointed with her sunshade at another house.

“But that’s the Eastern !” exclaimed Hal, beside himself. “You can’t go there.”

The poor woman, feeling herself an outcast from yachting society, sank upon the

bag. "Where *can* I go to get out of this sun?" she wailed.

"I don't know, Mother," said Hal, bravely. "But if you stay here with Non, I'll hunt up a place. They say all the boarding-houses and hotels are full. I'll try, though."

"Why not take her aboard until we find a place?" suggested Non, more hospitably.

Trot, at this, jumped into his mistress's arms and began to kiss her profusely, quite as if he understood the suggestion. Perhaps he did. At any rate, the dog's cordiality extended itself to Hal, whose whole mood turned right-about-face and welcomed his mother.

In a few minutes the dory was alongside the "Kittiewink." Assisted by Phin Scrod, the two boys, and the terrier, Mrs. Maynot got aboard. To be sure she sat on the gunwale, and well nigh upset the dory; and

Phineas laughed so that he almost let her drop back ; but no other incident diversified the voyage from the float to the “ Kittie-wink,” and Mrs. Maynot sank gratefully upon the deck of the vessel she had come to condemn. The harbor was like a big dish of skimmed milk. The broad deck of the boat looked clean and sweet ; it inspired trust and content. Besides, the boys were there within reach.

Hal bustled and brought a glass of lemonade. Phin and Non hastily put up the awning. A steamer chair was placed in the cock-pit. With a gasp of relief Mrs. Maynot, heated with travel and anxiety, was tucked into the chair.

“ If you can stand what we have, Mother,” ventured Hal, timidly, “ till after dinner, then I ’ll hunt you up a place.”

With more cheerfulness than Hal had seen in her for a long time, Mrs. Maynot smiled and said, “ You need n’t, my son.”

“Why, Mother? You’re not going home to-night, are you?”

The two boys and Phin crowded around her. She was the first lady whom the “Kittiewink” had entertained aboard, and, after all, it was a great occasion. The boys began to feel that it looked well, and conferred honor upon them and the boat. From a source of distress Mrs. Maynot was fast becoming an object of pride.

“No, Hal, I am not going home for a week. Your father has gone on a vacation with Dr. Plaster, to Saratoga, to a medical convention.”

“I—I do n’t understand,” stammered Hal.

“I am very comfortable,” said Mrs. Maynot, leaning luxuriously back upon the cushioned chair. “I shall stay here!”

The boys looked at each other as if a torpedo had been discharged at them. Phin took advantage of the solemn still-

ness to go forward of the mast and execute a low, prolonged whistle.

“But, Mother, you’ll be seasick in an hour. We have no room to sleep in. I never heard of ’em doing that!” gasped Hal.

“It is always proper for a mother to be near her son,” said Mrs. Maynot, with dignity. “Besides, dear boys, I can be braver than you know. I promise not to interfere with your fun.”

When Mrs. Maynot had eaten her dinner, which she praised profusely, Phin and the boys brightened up and joined heartily in the novel experience. They determined to make the best of it, and so they did.

“I’m afraid they won’t come until to-morrow,” said Mrs. Maynot, late that afternoon.

“What won’t?” demanded the boys in chorus.

“The doughnuts and the apple-pies and the life-preservers. I sent for six.”

“Six life-preservers !” ejaculated Phin.

Mrs. Maynot nodded pleasantly.

“Jemimawatermelons ! where will ye put ’em ? We’ve already got five, mum, an’ a soapstone chucked in.”

CHAPTER VI.

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

MRS. MAYNOT had slept aboard two nights; that is to say, she had twice spent nine hours in the cabin of the "Kittiewink." Non had turned into the skipper's bunk in the forecastle. Phineas had doubled up on the floor of the same apartment, while Hal, having suspended a blanket fore-and-aft in the cabin as a curtain, had slept in Non's bunk opposite to his mother. Such makeshifts are common at sea. For a short time they are part and parcel of the summer's fun, and the source of its jolliest frolic. A woman's presence is the transforming energy of mankind. Saturate a ball with lavender, whisk it before a cage of tigers, and its penetrating

scent subdues the fiercest of animals to ecstasy. So a woman suddenly thrust even upon a yacht will put a new and softer life into it. The indescribable odor of ship, which always meets one, even upon the grandest vessel, was now subdued by a copious sprinkling of violet water, by a profusion of aromatic pinks. For the first time beds were made up as they should be; and Phineas Scrod, who had up to this time stubbornly refused to obey his little captain in the matter of uniform, and had put aside his blue suit and brass buttons for old clothes and shirt-sleeves, now appeared in his best, and looked as elegant as the captain on a forty-six-footer. The old "Kittiewink," so used to fish-scales and the careless ways of fishermen, now seemed to blink at its gala dress; and if we may presume to say it, rubbed its eyes in the wonder of having, for the first time, a lady aboard.

But at dawn of the second day came a

change. A fog-swell rolled into the unwrinkled harbor of Marblehead. It crept into the little cove, under the lee of which the "Kittiewink" rested. It rocked the boat. The boom rattled, and the gaff creaked at the mast. Now Mrs. Maynot started from her troubled sleep in fright. She lay in the hard bunk listening. The sun cast a rosy light into the cabin, and filtered through the heavy blanket-curtain. Mrs. Maynot was accustomed to an immovable bed. She had forgotten that the Atlantic ocean could offer anything but the sleekness of Marblehead harbor in a dead calm. The boat did not rock the day before. Why should it ever? Again there came the sickening motion. This time she started up and called, —

"Hal ! Phineas ! Something is happening !"

The others jumped at the call.

"What's up, mum ?" demanded Phin.

"I don't know," ejaculated Mrs. Maynot, as the "Kittiewink" took another forward plunge. "I think it is a tidal wave."

The boys, impressed by the word, rushed to the cock-pit. But Phineas did his best to control his voice as he quickly spoke, —

"I see a tidal wave on the coast o' Brazil off Valpraisy in fifty-five, an' I know what they be. I guess this ain't nothin' but an ocean swell. You need n't be afeard, mum, while *I*'m aboard."

Trot was the only member of the crew who was not aroused by this incident. But when, by seven o'clock, the swell increased and became an actual chop, then Mrs. Maynot, faint from dizziness and lack of food, began the following conversation. Trot, who by this time was acclimated to the boat, and did not mind the swell in the least, snuggled in her lap, and punctuated her feeble remarks with yelps at Hal, who was making faces at the terrier.

“Phineas!” called Mrs. Maynot.

Phineas came to her chair in the cock-pit, and looked at her critically; then said, “I think you had better go ashore, mum.”

“Is it like this all of the time?” asked Mrs. Maynot, disregarding his suggestion.

Hal looked at the skipper apprehensively. If he said “yes,” his mother might be frightened, and forbid the cruise to the Isles of Shoals, which he was anticipating. If Phineas said “no,” she would persist in staying, to her own discomfort and the ruin of their fun.

“Ye see, mum,” explained the skipper, carefully, “there might be a slat calm in the harbor and quite a sea runnin’ outside, or thar might be a swell an’ no wind, or a wind an’ no swell.”

“Oh!” exclaimed the bewildered lady, “the water is a dreadful thing!”

Phin, who had been fearing an outburst, now spoke again, with an assuring glance at the trembling boys, —

“In Janooary, mum, it ain’t fit sailing fur boys, though I would n’t want a better hull under me than this yere ‘Kittiewink;’ but if Providence favors ye, the sea is n’t to be feared in July an’ August any more than yer bed o’ garden-sass, an’ ye need n’t have no more mistake about that.”

The hardy sailor delivered this opinion in his grandest tone. Mrs. Maynot did not see Hal’s hand steal gratefully into Phin’s fist. Her sea-sick eyes were closed.

“Is n’t there any such sailing as in As-sawompset pond?” asked Mrs. Maynot, with an effort. “Boats don’t tip there. I think I should enjoy it.”

“Why, Mother!” exclaimed Hal, “the ocean is n’t the same as an old pond. Don’t you know that?”

“I know it, my son; but it ought to be,” she said conclusively.

“I only reck’lect one place on the hull coast whar ye might stay aboard an’ be com-

fortable like," said Phin, after a moment's thought.

"Where is that?" asked the two boys, incredulously, with an accent of disdain.

"Squam River!" answered the imperturbable skipper.

"How do you get there?" and Mrs. Maynot, much to Hal's dismay, sat up with brightening eyes.

"Ye sail to Gloucester, an' go in by the Cut."

"Do you mean Annisquam?" In spite of himself, Hal began to look less skeptical and more resigned. "Well, Squam is n't so bad. Don't you know, Mother, Louise is there this summer, and a whole raft of girls."

"Do you mean Louise Concord?" asked Non, becoming a little excited in his turn.

"Yep," said Hal, superbly, with the consciousness of owning a pretty cousin of sixteen.

“But I can’t do that, Phineas,” Mrs. Maynot relapsed with a sigh, thinking of the long trip by water, and disregarding the cousin.

“Ye can take the mornin’ train, mum,” explained Phin, amiably, “an’ meet us at the Cut Bridge. We’ll keep yer baggage aboard. The wind is fair. We can make the run in about two hours. Maybe we’d be thar fust an’ wait for ye.”

The upshot of it all was that Mrs. Maynot and the boys assented happily to Phin’s proposal, — Mrs. Maynot for the sake of smooth sailing, and the boys for the chance of doing nautical honors to a group of pretty girls.

At twenty minutes past twelve, Mrs. Maynot drove up in a hack to what is known in Gloucester as the “Cut Bridge.” The water that rushes to and fro, under this narrow drawbridge, as the tide makes or

ebbs, converts Cape Ann into an island. This strait is called Squam River, and leaving Gloucester Harbor, it broadens before it reaches the railroad bridge; it zigzags past cottages and camps in a tortuous, narrow channel, with a wide expanse of shallow estuaries, until it reaches Annisquam, and then sweeps past a treacherous bar into Ipswich Bay. Sometimes, at low tide, a dory cannot make the four-mile passage between the two deeps. At high tide a vessel drawing ten feet, if very skilfully piloted, can go through. The scenery in the river is beautiful, and much appreciated; but the mud-flats and sand-bars are, alas! too numerous for comfortable navigation.

Mrs. Maynot dismissed the hack, and looked seaward. Her eyes immediately fell. No familiar vessel was anchored near the beach. Nobody was there to meet her. Where was Scrod? Where was the "Kit-

tiewink"? And where were her boys? For a long time, protected by a sunshade, she sat upon a dusty granite block, sweltering in the unclouded mid-day sun of a mid-summer, windless day. She was hungry and she was thirsty; she was lonely and uneasy. The harbor and the open sea were as smooth as the pavement in front of her own house, and as safe. Great fishing schooners lay as motionless as vessels in an etching. A huge Italian salt-bark swept past the idle fishermen with an important air, for she was being towed in by a fussy little tug. The tide was high, and her berth at the dock was prepared for her. Now and then a faint groan, coming from the ocean, startled the waiting woman. It was like the moaning of a condemned soul. It was the whistling buoy off Eastern Point, protesting with parched throat against this unnatural calm. Mrs. Maynot began to grow warmer and dustier. Her face burned

red and redder. She took off her moist gloves and rolled them into a little ball and tucked them into her moist pocket. She strained her eyes to search the blistering sea till they smarted, and they smarted till the tears came. A steam-launch had come along, and after half a dozen ineffectual whistles had brought the man of the drawbridge to open it. Mrs. Maynot, seeing the draw-tender preparing to let the launch through, approached him impetuously, —

“Are you sure this is the Cut?”

“Yes’m.”

“And is that Squam River?” demanded Mrs. Maynot, pointing to the stream of water twenty feet or so wide that lost itself in meadows and curves.

“Yes’m. Will you stay on the bridge, ma’am?”

“Is that craft,” persisted Mrs. Maynot, waving her parasol at the launch as it

puffed through, "going to a place called Annisquam?"

The man of experience replied that it belonged to a "summer gent" who was stopping there.

"Then," said Mrs. Maynot with great decision, "I am too late. The 'Kittiewink' has gone through. It's too bad. They should have waited for me. It was not kind in Phin. How shall I catch up to them?" She scanned the river, but the boat was not in sight.

"Beg pardon, ma'am. What did you say had gone through?"

"The 'Kittiewink.' It is my son's ship. We started from Marblehead at the same time, about nine o'clock. Phineas said he would get here before the train. He said there was a good breeze. They ought to be here now. Can't you see them and point them out to me?"

The bridge-tender looked as if he wanted

to laugh ; but seeing the evident distress of the lady as she looked yearningly upon the vast mirror before her, he said gently :

“I’m sorry, ma’am, to tell you that chances are they haint left Baker’s. The air died out not two hours ago. They might be ten hour comin’. I once knew a party that was three days goin’ from Marblehead to the inner harbor.” He meant to comfort, while he inflicted agony.

Mrs. Maynot threw up her hands, and dropping upon the stone, burst out crying.

“I guess you ain’t had no dinner,” said the draw-tender, sympathetically.

Mrs. Maynot controlled her feelings immediately, and shook her head. “Is it very dangerous ?” she sobbed, fearing the worst.

The draw-tender smiled. “It’s about as dangerous as it is for you to be sitting here. You’d better go to the Vermillion and wait. They can’t go through until to-morrow noon nohow.”

“The Vermillion, sir?” Mrs. Maynot spoke severely. She did not know what the man meant. It occurred to her that the Vermillion might be some kind of a saloon.

“The Vermillion is right there, ma’am. See that big hotel? You can get a splendid dinner there, and get cool and quiet; and when the ‘Sissymink’ comes, I’ll tell them.”

“The ‘Kittiewink,’ sir! And, sir, you may tell my son that I am anxiously awaiting him at the Verbillion.”

With these sad words, Mrs. Maynot gathered herself and her parasol and took out her gloves. Slowly and mournfully she departed in the burning sun for the Vermillion Hotel. When she had gone a little way, she felt a gentle touch upon her arm. She stopped abruptly. It was the draw-tender.

“Beg pardon again, lady, but I thought ye might like to know that the tide is fair as far as Norman’s Woe, an’ if a little air

'springs up after sundown, ye might see 'em by nine o'clock maybe. When the 'Kittie-mink' comes, I'll send him up, ma'am."

The good-natured man turned back quickly towards his draw, for the whistle of another boat was calling him shrilly and impatiently.

CHAPTER VII.

A DAY AND A NIGHT.

IT was the afternoon of the great Atlantic calm, and the "Kittiewink" was nine hours out of Marblehead. Non and Hal were on the blistering deck, vainly seeking a cool shade. The boat, as if possessed by a teasing spirit, persisted in heading towards the sun, so that the main-sail cast only a knife-blade of a shadow. Trot panted piteously, and lay with his tongue hanging over the rail, wistfully eying the cool, motionless water.

"Oh, Phin!" gasped Hal. Phin, by the way, was down below, tidying up the fore-castle. When the breeze began to die away he became very grave. When it had died,

he became taciturn. "Oh, Phin! what will my mother say?"

Phin answered nothing at all.

"This is a nice way of going to Gloucester in two hours!" said Non, pettishly.

"But Mother!" urged Hal; "she is terribly nervous, you know. She'll think we have gone to the bottom. She may get lost, waiting in the Cut. We must do something." Hal thought of the Cut as a deep and dangerous gorge, something like Rafe's Chasm. A calm seemed to him something to be manipulated. Phin put his head up the companion-way, and looked troubled enough.

"I guess the Cut won't hurt her," he said gruffly; "an' ye can't do nothin' until an air comes."

"But you promised Mother to be there before she was; you know you did, Phin!" proceeded Hal, angrily. "A gentleman always keeps his promise; and if you don't

get there right away, you know Mother will never trust you again."

"That 's so," said Non, with an air of conviction.

Phineas groaned. "Yer ma can't blame me fur the Lord a-sendin' sich a tom-fool of a calm," said Phin, with the dogged determination of clearing himself.

"I don't know," said Hal, doubtfully. "You 'll have to explain that to her; I darsn't."

Phin groaned more heavily than before. None knew better than he the difficulty of explaining their predicament, or any other nautical facts, to Mrs. Maynot.

"I 'm afraid that she will never let us go to sea again," moaned Non, doing his best to pile the agony upon Phin.

"I think she might charter a steam-tug, and send out for us. Don't you see one, Phin?" grumbled Hal.

"Whar's the money a-comin' from?"

suggested Phin, sarcastically, glad to turn the tables.

“How long is this going to last, Phin?” demanded Hal, imperatively, after having made up his mind that no tug was in sight. “I’m the captain, Phin, and you’ve *got* to tell me.”

“When you kin tell me how many buckets of water there is in the Atlantic ocean, I’ll tell ye when one of these spells dies away.”

“But any way you can tell us how far we are from the Cut,” said Non, who was not yet utterly subdued.

“’Bout five miles.”

“When can we get there? Please, Phin, be good and tell us. You see you promised to be there, and my mother is very anxious,” urged Hal.

In answer Phineas shook his head. The persistence of the boys in expecting him to predict the end of a calm was more depress-

ing to him than the calm itself. Besides, he did not wish to tell the boys that such a calm as this was, and promised to be, might last all night.

“Then,” said Hal, with his usual impetuous temper, “if you don’t answer I will row there. I can find it, I know.” He made a motion as if to pull the dory alongside. It had drifted across the bow of the “Kittiewink.”

“No, my little captain,” said Phin, gently, “we’ll tow her in.”

This brilliant idea had been agitating the skipper’s mind for some hours. He had put it off as long as he could. Considering that there was nothing that Phineas hated worse than towing, this arduous resolution of saving his nautical credit must be considered as sublime. This was the boys’ first experience of a real calm at sea, which is a far more hopeless state of the weather than a storm. They could not understand how the

most weather-wise sailor may be at a loss to predict calm or squall two hours ahead of time along the North Shore. The day was when it could be done; but now times are changed, and the oldest sailor is often at fault in his predictions. The two young sailors had to take turns in "spelling" Phineas at the oars of the little dory which drew the big "Kittiewink" reluctantly over the scorching water; and blistered hands and stiffened back soon taught them what a calm may mean.

Just after the sun set, at eight o'clock, a sight common enough in Gloucester harbor of a summer evening met the strained eyes of a lady patrolling the beach between the Vermillion Hotel and the Cut Bridge. The tide was low, and the beach was broad and well filled with promenaders. A sloop towed in by one man in a dory stole softly to within a hundred feet of Mrs. Maynot, and eagerly dropped anchor. As Mrs.

Maynot was not accustomed to seeing vessels journeying at sea with sails furled and a dory pulling like a cart-horse, she overlooked the sight of the "Kittiewink" in this predicament. In fact, she did not recognize the boat at all.

Leaving Non aboard to protect the sloop, Phin and Hal rowed with raw palms across the last stretch to the beach. Trot was there, too, perched in the bow, panting and disgusted. The three jumped out on the pebbles and looked around questioningly.

Mrs. Maynot had sat down in the shadow of a great rock, and was staring at the water. She wondered why that boat had stopped just there to obstruct her view. She had come after dinner, had returned after supper, and was considering the problem of camping out until the boat turned up. Mrs. Maynot, who was an intelligent woman in other matters, had no comprehension of the fact that a calm at sea precluded

the possibility of celerity on the part of a sail-boat. She had just come to the conclusion that it was a peculiarly interesting and safe state of things if only her boys were securely in. If she had to sail she would have preferred doing it without wind. She considered unruffled seas to be as they were intended to be at the creation. To her a boat that rocked and tipped was an abomination. Then she argued, steamers were not retarded by a calm; why should the "Kittiewink" be? After so many long hours of waiting she therefore began to have serious thoughts of mishap, when a voice reached her ears.

"Excuse me, madam," said Hal, lifting his hat politely, "can you tell me —"

There was a shriek of joy, followed by another. Mother and son embraced each other, amid barkings and squeaks that quickly brought together a good-sized crowd.

“How did you get here?” demanded Mrs. Maynot, when Phin appeared. “I have looked for you since half-past twelve. You promised to be here then. It seems to me you are very late. Have you any excuse?”

“We towed in, mum,” said Phin, bowing. “We did our best.”

“What does he mean, my son?” asked Mrs. Maynot, putting her hand upon Hal’s arm.

“Why we rowed nearly all of the way, Mother. We could n’t sail, — there was n’t a breath. Did n’t you see Phin pulling the ‘Kittiewink’ in with the dory ahead? That’s towing.”

“If I had known,” said Mrs. Maynot, calmly, “that you were going to row all the way from Marblehead, I might have gone with you. You should have told me, Phineas.”

After Phineas had explained to Mrs.

Maynot in an apologetic way as well as he could the nature of a calm and its result upon sailing, she surprised the party by saying that if sailing were always like this, she thought she should like it.

“But it is n’t, Mother. I think I feel a little breeze now,” said Hal. He wet his forefinger and turned it to all parts of the compass. He had seen Black Tarr do that once. “I think it comes from the nor’-west,” he said authoritatively, pointing to the mouth of the harbor.

“Sou’-west ye mean, my little captain,” said Phineas, with a grin. “Haint ye larned the pints of the compass yet?”

“If there is a tornado coming,” said Mrs. Maynot, fearfully, “let us start right away for Squam River.”

Some of the by-standers laughed, where-upon Trot barked at them fiercely.

“But the tide don’t serve, mum, till twelve to-night,” said Phineas, hastily.

“It’s mighty ticklish workin’ her up to Squam in the dark.”

The view that there was anything dangerous or exciting in the midnight sail aroused Hal, who began to stir about restlessly; but Trot, who was accustomed to go to bed directly after tea, curled himself up with a sigh of content in Mrs. Maynot’s lap, and ran out his little pink tongue with a look of supreme happiness.

“Hullo!” cried Non, to nowhere in particular from the boat. Non was now thoroughly tired out at being left alone, and a little frightened at the long absence of the party.

“All right!” yelled Hal in return. “I’ve found her; we’re coming! Let’s go through the Cut, Mother. You’ll be aboard, and it will save hotel bills,” continued Hal, in a low voice.

“It is n’t that,” explained Mrs. Maynot to Phin. “But if the wind blows again, we shall

be safer in the river, I know; for I was brought up on a river. I understand that."

"I've been a pile of times on Squam River. I kin pilot ye through if I hev to. I was raised there as a boy. But I don't think ye ought to go through the Cut in the dark." So said Phin, decidedly.

"Phineas," said Mrs. Maynot, impressively, "you must allow me to decide that. If you are a good pilot, that is enough. I must consider the safety of my boys first. It is my duty, when it blows, to get them away from the ocean as quickly as I can. It is nearly ten. We will go aboard and wait."

"I'd rather be twenty mile off the coast in a gale o' wind than go through thar in the dark," said Phin, stubbornly.

"Oh, Phineas!" exclaimed Mrs. Maynot, "how can you talk so? How can you rather be at sea in a dangerous wind than be in a peaceful river? I am afraid you are not a fit person for my boys. It is settled;

you will do as I say ; we will start to-night. Safety is the first consideration."

Phin started to answer, but stopped. After all, what could he say to change the anxious mind of his mistress, whom he really loved ? Hal, delighted at the prospect of a midnight adventure, helped his mother from the beach into the dory, and offered to row the boat. But by half-past eleven the sky became overclouded, and the light wind increased. Phineas shook his head, and growled as they hoisted the main-sail. The "Kittiewink" began to toss in the short chop of the sea.

"You must hurry," urged Mrs. Maynot. "What might happen if we stayed here !"

Toot ! toot ! toot ! blew the fog-horn from the deck of the "Kittiewink," as a signal for the bridge to be opened. Then they waited in the answering stillness for the "Hullo !" of recognition and the rattle of the swinging bridge. For what seemed a

long time the horn blew in vain. Phineas hoped it would continue to do so.

“If he waits much longer, the tide will drop, and we ’ll hev to lay here,” said Phin, after another ineffectual blast.

“Hal and I will go and wake him up. We must not fail to go through,” said Mrs. Maynot. In this emergency she developed unexpected resources that astonished the crew. “I know where he lives,” continued Mrs. Maynot, explaining herself. “I talked with him, and he was very kind. Besides, I think I would rather not go through that bridge in the ship. I had rather get in on the river side. I should feel better.”

“Then you go, Non, and bring the dory back,” ordered Phin, strangely enough falling into the plan without a murmur. Phin was easily managed by a woman, especially by a lady, and hated to disappoint his employer’s wife.

Mrs. Maynot and Hal scrambled ashore in

the dark, and over the wall and across the road, and vociferously besieged the house in which Mrs. Maynot affirmed that the draw-tender lived. Mrs. Maynot called politely, but Hal howled at the top of his lungs.

“What do you want?” shouted a gruff voice.

“We want to go through right away,” yelled Hal in return.

“What do you mean by wanting to go through here at dead of night?” demanded a feminine voice from behind the blind.

“Hold on, Sal, till I get me gun,” said the gruff voice. “I guess them’s the gang I heard of, that try to enter the front door and the back door at the same time. I’ll fix ’em.”

“For mercy sakes!” cried Mrs. Maynot, frightened half out of her wits. “We are not burglars, my good man. We only want you to open, so that we can go right through.”

“Them ’s stark lunies,” said the gruff voice again. “Look here! You go home, and don’t wake honest folks! We ain’t no public highway. D’ye want me to call the police?”

“No, no!” cried Hal. “You would n’t arrest *me*? I’m the captain of the ‘Kittie-wink.’ The tide is going; we want to go through to Squam.”

A good-natured laugh replied this time to the bewildered travellers. “Ye geese! It’s over there you belong, — there! You hav’ n’t got the right house. There!” The window slammed down, and the gruff man went back to bed.

“How very peculiar!” sighed Mrs. Maynot. “I am sure the man lived in this house this afternoon.”

However, when the draw-tender was really found, he proved to be willing, wide-awake, and pleasant, and cheerfully went to his duty.

“I still think I shall get in on the river

side. It is very windy, and I think it will be safer. I shall feel more at home," said Mrs. Maynot.

It was very dark, and the mother and the son did not see the man's face when she made this suggestion.

"With a fair wind, I'm afraid you'll find it hard work a-stoppin' of her when she spins through," said the draw-tender, turning the crank after he had shut them out.

"We shall step down to the bank, and Phin will manage all that," replied Mrs. Maynot, hopefully.

This she proceeded to do as well as she could, assisted by Hal, and warned by the bridge-tender. It was an ugly bank, steep, muddy, slippery, and hard to get down. Mrs. Maynot scrambled and clambered, and Hal held and hauled, and together they reached a firm footing on some granite blocks, and stood looking out into the rushing darkness for the "Kittiewink."

There were a few loud calls, a mysterious bustle, another call; then there was a swish. A shadow blacker than the night loomed up at their very side, overhung them, and like a gigantic bat passed swiftly by. The lady and the boy drew back, both frightened. The boat had come so near that they could have jumped aboard.

“It’s them!” called the draw-tender, as he began to shut the bridge.

“Whoa!” shouted Mrs. Maynot. “Whoa there! Whoa, Phin!” She made a step forward, and had not Hal held her, she would have gone “ke-plunk” into Squam River.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NIGHT AND A DAY.

As the reader may have surmised, Mrs. Maynot was not nautical. Besides, she was rather a dependent woman, used to leaning upon her husband in all matters; and in his absence she found it natural to lean upon Hal, her only son. It is not a light matter for even the strongest-hearted man to stand alone at dead of night by the side of the mouth of Squam River. But to the sensitive woman and her high-strung boy, as they listened to the gurgle of the black tide and in vain strained to hear some familiar sound from their own boat, the moments were grewsome enough. The "Kittiewink" had disappeared as if it had sunk into the crater of a volcano.

“This is an awful Cut, Mother,” said Hal, clasping her hand tightly in order to give and take courage. “Do you think they are more lost than we?”

“I don’t believe,” said Mrs. Maynot, after a pause, “that Phin would mean to desert us in this way. I hope he has not been struck by apoplexy. He ought to sail back to us.”

Now, the facts were these. As the river was not over thirty feet wide at this point, and as both the wind and the tide were carrying the “Kittiewink” strongly away, to bring the sloop back was as impossible as swimming on a dry boulder. But neither Mrs. Maynot nor Hal understood this. They strained their ears and listened painfully. From afar came the dim sound of oars; then it stopped.

“You hold my hand while I yell, Mother,” said Hal. So dismal was the place that at first he was frightened at his own voice.

But soon its familiar sound reassured him, and he howled like a Comanche Indian.

"It's only a poor woman and a boy a-tryin' to get to Squam. I guess they left 'em," said the draw-tender, in explanation to a policeman who had with unprecedented valor made up his mind to enforce the peace.

"I-yi!" came back a slight voice, buffet-ing against the wind.

"It's Trot, Mother! We're all right!" cried Hal, boisterously, releasing her hand.

"You are mistaken," said Mrs. Maynot, confidently. "That is not a dog; it is a boy."

"Then it's Non. — Non! Non!"

"I'm stuck in the mud. Come and help me off!" called Non, through the dark.

"Shove her off, you id., with the oars!" answered Hal, putting his hands to his mouth.

"All righ-t!"

An anxious silence followed.

"Where are you? I can't see an inch. I'm off, I — think," cried Non, in woe-begone jerks.

Bunting along the narrow, sedgy banks, Non, guided by the sarcasm and praise of his friend, at last stopped in desperation at the stone pier below the feet of the two castaways.

"You can row, Hal," said Non, almost crying in his plight. "I am covered from head to foot with this nasty mud. I had to get out twice to shove her off, and went in up to everywhere. You pick out the way now, and let me hoot at you."

Hal, feeling grateful for rescue at any price, consented. He felt that he would have no difficulty in managing the dory.

Mrs. Maynot had nothing to say. They had come to Squam River at her urging; they had come to be safe. This was a bad beginning; and she had a sense of relief

that, so far, she was not at the bottom of this treacherous stream.

“Where is Phin, and the ‘Kittiewink’?” asked Hal, after a few strokes. Safe in his own dory, Hal began to take on the airs of a captain of a fifty-tonner finding fault with his crew.

“He said we could catch up to him at the railroad bridge, while he was waiting to have them open,” answered Non, good-naturedly.

“Another bridge!” groaned Mrs. Maynot, from the stern seat. “Why did n’t Phin tell me?”

Hal had not bumped into the inoffensive shore more than a dozen desperate times, and perhaps had not rowed more than ten minutes, when they heard the sound of the “Kittiewink’s” fog-horn. This cheered the three amazingly. With hope they continued upon their bewildering voyage. Well might Mrs. Maynot wish that she had never come

to this dreadful river, or left the "Kittiewink." The black current seemed to twist and turn like a sea-serpent. The boys no longer pooh-poohed each other. Completely used up, Hal soon resigned his seat to the stronger lad. Where was the "Kittiewink"? The horn that had seemed so near now sounded faintly, and seemed to be receding.

It is about a mile from the "Cut Bridge" to the draw of the railroad bridge. Here the tide divides, and the current that runs among the barnacled piers, along the narrow, boarded channel, is at any time swift and capricious. Many a boat has been overturned here in broad day, when unskilfully rowed through the passage-way: yet it is not at all dangerous for the skilful sailor.

But to row up Squam River at night, at ebb of tide, without getting hopelessly stuck in the mud, or entangled, or perhaps upset by the swirling current at the railroad bridge, is a feat to be proud of. How in the black-

ness they got there, no one can tell; but suddenly the little boat seemed to leap ahead. The tide had begun to turn. It tore through the narrow channel at the railroad bridge; it sucked the dory in.

“Down!” cried Hal in terror, not knowing what was coming, or into what whirlpool they had drifted.

Rowing was useless. Relentlessly the swift current now carried them along. Bump! bump! The dory struck against a pile, and then another, and a third. It careened until it almost took in the black water.

“Oh, Phin!” shrieked Hal and Non, loudly. “Kittiewink!”

Crash! One of the oars, protruding from the oar-lock, caught in something, and broke with an ominous crackling.

“Look out there!” shouted a voice from above. “Let her drift! The tide’ll take ye through. I could n’t wait for ye to

come up, and yer boat has gone through ahead."

Then the dory shot again into a broad expanse of water, and the terrible bridge was luckily past. They now made no attempt to row. They simply followed their instinct and yelled. The sound of a horn replied to them. It grew nearer and clearer.

"We're catching up, I guess." So they comforted each other as they drifted along, shouting.

Mrs. Maynot behaved very well. She did not shriek nor stir, nor give advice. In real danger she proved herself a self-possessed woman. She had not spoken for a long time. At last she said in a low voice, —

"There! I hear Trot. He is barking on that *g*-flat bark he has. We're safe now."

Then came Phin's hoarse voice, — the sweetest music in the world. "Here I am," he cried. "Pull for me voice!"

“But we’ve broken an oar.”

“Then paddle with the other! Take it easy. I won’t stir.”

“He’s anchored,” said Hal, authoritatively. “He has done just as I would have ordered.”

Now the two boats seemed to be drawing together. Non worked his single oar mightily. Trot’s bark ran from *g*-flat to *a*-sharp, and up again. Another paddle, and still another, — and a strong hand grasped the dory, and held it with a clutch that was like that of fate itself.

“Are ye all safe?” asked Phin, huskily.

“Yes, thank God, Phin!” Mrs. Maynot spoke devoutly, and well she might.

The frightened party scrambled upon the deck of their yacht. Phineas was very sober. He did not dare to explain to them the significance of their narrow escape. He wondered how he could have been so yielding as to let Mrs. Maynot have her own

way. What might it have cost? Suppose they had drifted with only one oar, perhaps past Annisquam, out into Ipswich Bay! Had the "Kittiewink" not stopped where the water was slowest, that catastrophe would have been more than possible.

They gathered together on the damp deck without saying a word for a long time. Mrs. Maynot thought of her husband. But Hal thought of Robinson Crusoe. Non was so bewildered that he did not think at all; but Phineas went forward, and said to Trot, —

"If we get out o' this yere fix alive, you don't ketch me in Squam River again."

"Do you think we had better go on? What is this main-sail down for?" demanded Hal, with a sense of reviving responsibility.

"Do let us stay here until morning," pleaded Mrs. Maynot, timidly; for she had made up her mind to dictate no longer on boating matters. "I think perhaps it will be safer."

"Yes 'm," said Phineas, laconically.

"Then we will stay here, Phin, until morning, as Mother says," said Hal, with a tone of authority.

"I think we will," answered Phin, with a suggestive intonation.

"Why? What do you mean?" asked Hal, suspiciously.

"Wall, if ye want ter know, we've stuck here. We've run aground, mum. The channel hez shifted since I was a boy, an' we're stuck. We *can't* go on. You can stay here till mornin' as well as not, — in fact, a sight better."

"Oh, I am so glad! I feel so much surer to be resting on land. I feel much relieved, Phin. I think we had better go to bed. You have done very well, Phineas," said Mrs. Maynot, cheerfully.

Phin, who had expected a volley of reproaches for this accident, upon hearing this unqualified commendation, whistled. "Just

as ye say, mum," he replied gravely; "but I think I'll stay up an' see how she's struck when the tide leaves her. I've got one anchor out; perhaps I'll have to put out the spare."

"What! Anchor her on dry land!" laughed Non.

"Yes, me boy," said the skipper, dryly; "them's the times ye want to hold her the most."

Mrs. Maynot retired to her bunk immediately. To her it had been a frightful day and night; but the dangers were safely past; the "Kittiewink" was in a position practically impregnable to the sea; the boat neither rocked nor pitched nor swayed. As Mrs. Maynot dropped off to sleep, she felt for the first time the security which she had courted in Squam River.

But Phineas stayed awake. He knew that the "Kittiewink" lay in a precarious situation. She had run head-first up on a

bank barely covered at high tide; the deep channel is fringed with such. Thus two thirds of the boat lay in deep water, the rest in shallow. Phin had sounded with an oar, and had found out this uncomfortable fact. When the tide dropped, the boat must necessarily drop too. As the tide rises about eleven feet in Squam River, at low water the "Kittiewink" would in her present situation stand almost upright, — a position so straining as to be dangerous to spars and hull. But that was not the worst. When the tide would make again, the water, unable to raise the stern, would flow in over it and fill the boat. Then the "Kittiewink" would be nothing less than swamped.

With apprehension Phin watched the gradual settling of the boat. There was no danger to her at present, — that would come to-morrow. But Phineas brooded over the disgrace. The coast was full of old fishing-

mates, who would like nothing better than to paddle out in their dories from Annisquam and Gloucester when the news came, to offer him derision and advice. If the "Kittiewink" could only have run ashore in a respectable way, he could have stood it; but to be wrecked on a mud-flat in Squam River was more than his professional pride could bear. He blamed himself severely for "giving in" to his employer's wife; but he did not blame her.

In the mean time Mrs. Maynot and the boys slept soundly. Dawn came, and so gently had the boat sunk stern down, that the three sleepers had not been awakened. But Phineas was not idle. There was a clam spade on board, which the boys had used enthusiastically the first boating week. At the earliest break of day Phineas had vigorously begun to dig the bow of the "Kittiewink" down. In his zeal he had forgotten about Mrs. Maynot. He dug and

pried and pushed, and dug again. As the tide fell, the job he had undertaken became at once easier and harder, — easier, for it gave him more room to work in; harder, for it continually brought greater pressure on the bow. Phin dug untiringly. It was well that he did so. At last, tired out, he stopped to rest. The sun was almost up; the tide was almost low. The “Kittiewink” looked as if she were trying to hop out of the water. Her appearance was exceedingly funny. Phin seemed to feel the “Kittiewink’s” loss of dignity. In despair, he pried and pushed for the hundredth time. There was a spurt of black ooze, a lurch, and a splash, followed by a succession of shrieks and figures. The “Kittiewink” had reeled sideways into the channel, which was not more than four feet deep now, and there she lay upon her side. The fall, which was considerable, had splashed the water into the cock-pit and the cabin, and had wet Mrs.

Maynot and Hal at the same time that the shock had waked them up.

“We’re run into!” yelled Hal. He had been thrown out of his bunk to the floor of the cabin. The cold ducking completed his fright. “We’re sinking!” he cried, as he rushed as well as he could up the tipping companion-way to the slanting deck.

“It has come at last,” said Mrs. Maynot. She closed her eyes, unable to move from fright. She expected the sea to swallow her up on the instant.

But Non, who had been sleeping like a log in the forecastle, and had not been slapped with the water, woke with the thought that he had had a nightmare, and coolly asked, “Hullo, Phin! What’s that?”

With shivering gaze Hal contemplated their isolated position in the sluggish river.

He looked in vain for the reason of his shock and shower-bath. With the exception of the slant of the boat, which he ex-

pected under the circumstances, there was nothing to account for his experience, except Phin.

As drowning did not immediately set in, Mrs. Maynot wrapped herself in a blanket and ventured up. The river, robbed of its fair overflow, looked insignificant, and as harmless as a "polliwog." Mrs. Maynot heaved a deep breath of relief.

"It was Phin, Mother," said Hal, with trembling lip. "He threw water on us for fun. I shall dismiss him on the spot."

But before the captain of the "Kittiewink" could carry out his formidable threat, Phin spoke up from the bank above him:

"I'm sorry to disturb ye, mum; but if she had n't fetched bottom, you'd 'a' had no yacht to take ye to Squam. She'd 'a' been as full as a herrin' by noon."

"Then you did n't throw water on us?" asked Hal, doubtfully. "Who did?"

"See here!" answered Phin, pointing to

the deep rut in the steep bank which the bow of the boat had made as it slid down. "Thar's where she were a lookin' like a grasshopper. Now she's where she ought to be, an' ye kin all rest easy. She won't swamp now, I'll bet!"

Phineas was radiant. The boat was not the worse for her tumble. Only Trot seemed to understand the situation. He ran out on the bowsprit and jumped into Phin's arms and kissed him good-morning. That little 'cuteness on Trot's part helped restore Hal's good humor and Mrs. Maynot's confidence. Trot seemed like home and dry land and common things.

"You have done very well," repeated Mrs. Maynot, cheerfully. "I can see, that we are perfectly safe."

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. MAYNOT'S FIRST SAIL.

IT was exactly at half-past two o'clock in the afternoon that the "Kittiewink" dropped her anchor successfully in Annisquam harbor. One might have thought that the "White Squadron" had appeared, to judge from the excitement that this simple nautical feat produced upon the community. A private naphtha-launch had generously offered to tow the wrecked boat in. As the wind was as uncertain as a broker's bank-account, the offer was accepted with haste. Row-boats began to cluster about the ungainly black sloop; and Hal and Non, feeling that heroism had been thrust upon them, tried to look like veteran yachtsmen, all the while casting

sheeps'-eyes about to see if anybody were laughing at them. Besides, where was Louise Concord? Where her party of girls? Might they not be among those merry boat-loads? The fact of it was, the river had been so uneventful that season that the news of the accident to the "Kittiewink" had spread like the tide. Everybody who had, or who might, could, should have, a boat, took one and rowed out to see what had happened. Artists, some men and most women, dropped their brushes with a half-ashamed alacrity for this unusual excitement. A safe wreck on a mud-flat was a thing that Squam could not afford to overlook.

Mrs. Maynot, behind an umbrella, on the steamer chair in the cock-pit, stood the gaze of the curious with admirable composure. Hal and Non felt rather proud of the attention which they excited among the summer boarders. But Phineas, although preferring to be towed than to tow himself, chafed at

the scoffs of a few small boys who came out to see sights and to dig clams. He said he felt like a cat-fish in a cage; he wasn't used to being gawked at so, and wished they were back at Marblehead. In fact, Phin's manner had changed since the morning of the day before. The night had made him morose. He regarded Mrs. Maynot with apprehensive suspicion. What might she not bring upon them next? Phin was not superstitious: but, in a respectful way, he felt that the sooner she was off the boat the better.

When the operation of anchoring had at last been performed, Phineas Scrod came aft, stood behind Mrs. Maynot's chair, and coughed. Mrs. Maynot, who thought that Phin was doing something, as usual, with ropes, did not notice him. Then Phineas coughed again.

"Am I in your way, Phin?" asked Mrs. Maynot, pleasantly.

“Excuse me, mum, but ye won’t be oneasy at what I say?” said Phin, slowly.

“Not at all. Is anything wrong? Does the ship leak?” asked Mrs. Maynot, jumping up.

“’T aint any matter with the boat,” proceeded Phin. “Ye see, I’ve got to the end of my dishes; we’ve had chowder three times, and beans twice —”

“What on earth are you driving at, Phineas?” interrupted his mistress, sitting down again.

“Wall, ye see, ye ain’t cumftolerable here, an’ perhaps ye’d better live ashore in Squam fur a spell.”

“Phineas Scrod,” said Mrs. Maynot, severely, “what more do you mean?”

“Wall, I don’t mean nothin’, mum, in partickelar; only this, mum, — it don’t seem to me this aint no place fur a woman on board a small packet like this, onless she’s

an out-and-out sailor; 'n' even then she's better off ashore."

"Do you mean to say that I make it perilous for my boys by living on the ship?" asked Mrs. Maynot, tremulously.

"Them's my idee, mum." Phineas had turned on all the courage he possessed to say this. He did it, or he thought he did it, as a duty, and always remembered it afterwards as the bravest deed of his life.

Mrs. Maynot looked the old sea-dog in the face. She saw there a fidelity and honesty that any woman should respect. Then she dropped her eyes. "I see it now," she said softly. "I think you are right. I will go at once. And, Phin," she added, laying her delicate white hand upon his rugged arm, "I shall trust my boy to you entirely."

Phin was greatly touched. He felt more-over a twinge of remorse; but he was in for it now. For good or ill he held to his

professional opinion, and the lady aboard must go ashore.

Non and Hal were below changing their clothes preparatory to hunting up the young ladies, and they had not heard this conversation.

"Ye needn't go right away," said Phin, in as hospitable a tone as he could command.

"I shall go immediately," said Mrs. Maynot, firmly. Phin's sense of duty was like a baby's compared to that of the mother of his captain.

The boys heard her decision, almost incredulously. But they were not troubled by it; truth to tell, they were relieved. They rowed Mrs. Maynot and her baggage ashore, and proceeded to hunt up a boarding-house for her and the cousin at the same time. Mrs. Maynot, it will be remembered, had not had a single sail upon the boat, — unless one called it a sail, the being towed by a naphtha launch over a section of Squam

River; yet she felt that she had known unlimited experience. She had spent several nights aboard, although these had all been passed either in a harbor or upon a mud-flat. Therefore it was with a certain regret that she abandoned the peaceful bosom of Squam River for the commonplace occupation of a boarding-house search on dry land.

This proved indeed no satisfactory business. "Full" — "Full" — "Full," came back the grim reply from door after door. At the fifth house which the party made an object of attack, Mrs. Maynot varied the question which she had been shooting with pertinacious patience at the village of Annisquam: "Have n't you a *little* room vacant?"

"Is there a young lady called Louise Concord staying here?" demanded Hal, eagerly, at the same time.

"I'm full!" answered the landlady, me-

chanically. Her cook, the thirteenth she had employed that summer, had just left her, and she was in a hurry to get back to her dinner.

"We did n't ask if *you* were full," said Hal, indignantly; "we asked for Miss Louise Concord."

"I'm too full to take her in," repeated the landlady, majestically. "I've never heard of her." With that she whisked away.

The three, followed by Trot, tramped across the hot dusty street to another boarding-house, and rang the bell a little impatiently. The landlady's daughter answered the summons. She was an attractive young lady, and the boys looked upon her with approval. Wild-roses were caught in her waist. She seemed herself a wild-flower of Cape Ann.

"I am looking for a room," began Mrs. Maynot, gently.

"I am so sorry ; but our last guests, a couple of artists from the West, have just put up cots in the woodshed. They say it will make a capital studio. You see — "

"Yes," answered Mrs. Maynot, sadly.

"Does my cousin, Louise Concord, stay here ? " began Hal.

"She is tall and very pretty," explained Non, with a slight blush.

"If you will go up the row, past that house, and across a vacant lot, in the second of three houses I think you may find her. She was staying there yesterday." The daughter of what must have been a very charming hostess bowed politely.

"I wish we could invite her to go out sailing in the 'Kittiewink,' Mother," said Hal, in a whisper. He was very much pleased with his first Squam young lady.

"By no means," returned his mother, in a horrified tone. "We don't even know her name."

“I guess I could find out,” protested Hal.

The girl seemed to divine his hospitality ; with an amused, indulgent smile she turned and vanished within the house.

“There !” said Hal, giving his foot a little stamp, “I shall never see her again. It’s real mean of you, Mother !” The memory of that pretty face stayed with the lad, as such little memories do stay in the fancies of boys, and even remained there for as much as a week or ten days.

But Non did not notice the landlady’s daughter ; he was intent upon the search for Louise, who was not his intimate cousin. How he wished she were ! He had seen her but once, six months before, when she was on a visit to the Maynots. He had since thought that he liked her, and hoped that she remembered and liked him. And yet he saw her in his mind but dimly. How tall she was ! and how beautiful ! She seemed to him like a lily of the valley, so

modest and sweet she was, and so delicate of complexion. He thought that this simile was his own discovery, and he treasured it in his heart, and meant to tell her of it when he grew up and would dare to.

Now the party approached the last boarding-house in Squam. They began to be thoroughly discouraged. Mrs. Maynot sat down on the piazza this time while Non eagerly rang the bell. Hall still sulked a little for that landlady's daughter, and stayed below. Trot, who felt that life was becoming monotonous, casting about him for amusement, discovered a knitting boarder on the piazza, and forthwith pounced upon her ball of yarn, and proceeded to wind himself up about her chair with inextricable skill.

When the mistress of the house appeared, Non put in the first word.

"She went yesterday," answered the landlady, laconically.

"Then I can have her room," said Mrs. Maynot, with a sigh of relief.

"That was filled last night. An artist from New York and his wife," continued the woman, in a kindly spirit, seeing Mrs. Maynot's look of utter dejection, "have curtained off part of the upper hall, and are sleeping there. He paints on canvas and she on paper."

"Where did she go?" asked Non, utterly oblivious of any other important need but his own.

"Who?" The landlady turned her experienced eye upon him, and asked, "Is that your dog?"

"Miss Louise Concord," insisted Non, impervious to everything but his point. Dr. Plaster always said that Non would succeed in life if he ever woke up.

"Oh, *she*? She went to Rockport. Shoo! scat! shoo! Your dog is twisting up my boarder. Can't you stop him? Scat, sir! *Scat!*"

"He has tied me up all around my legs," cried the boarder, who was an old lady, and did not seem to be able, from some occult reason, to move.

It took the united efforts of the whole party to separate the boarder and the terrier; and several private efforts on the part of Hal to convince Trot that the ball of yarn was not a rat and not to be worried.

"I think we had better go," said Mrs. Maynot, feebly, when the excitement subsided. "I can't get in anywhere. What shall I do?"

"Let's go to Rockport," said Non, decisively. "It's no fun here."

They walked slowly down to the wharf where their dory was tied. Hal carried the bag that came ashore to stay, and which could not find a lodging. It was now about one o'clock, almost the hottest part of the day; yet there was a slight breeze upon the

water, and several boats were skimming about idly. Phineas and his canned-soup dinner greeted them soberly. He knew by her looks that his mistress had failed to find the lodgings he recommended.

“Don’t put that bag down in the cabin,” said Mrs. Maynot to her son. “What shall I do, Phineas? You know it would not be right for me to stay here on the ship; it might make it unsafe.”

“That’s so, mum,” said Phineas, gravely. “You might take the evening train home.”

“But I do not wish to. Mr. Maynot will not be home until Saturday. I don’t want to be at home alone.”

Then for the second time Non suavely suggested that Louise Concord was at Rockport, and could find a place for the houseless lady. This idea met with unanimous approval; and it was decided that Mrs. Maynot should take the five o’clock stage for the Gloucester station, and go up on

the 6.15 train. The boys would sail around next day.

“It’s a shame!” said Hal, a little conscience-stricken, after dinner, and at the same time desirous of filling up the interval before her departure, “that Mother has never even had a sail. Can’t we take her out for a little spin? What do you say, Phin?”

The lady was delighted when Phin assented doubtfully to the proposition.

“Hal, will you get me my smelling-salts? It’s on the right-hand side. Don’t spill the things out! Be careful! You see I am not frightened.”

Mrs. Maynot was doing her best to be brave for the sake of a last impression. How many a woman has expended her vitality in trying to be heroic in the face of imaginary dangers! When the main-sail was going up, she asked with cunningly expressed anxiety: “Are you going to put up all that fabric?”

When the sail was finally hoisted, and the boat careened an inch or two in the light air, she gave a little jump from her chair, and with a quiver in her tone said: "Oh, Phin, I do hope she is hitched."

On being assured that she was, Mrs. Maynot leaned back with great relief. "As long as she is tied, I know I shall enjoy it very much."

Just before they started to haul up the anchor, Mrs. Maynot ventured: "Why can we not sail this way? I am sure it is very nice, and I am enjoying it."

"But we're not sailing, Mother," said Hal, impatiently; "we're anchored fast."

"My son, don't try to deceive your mother. Look at the shore moving. We are passing that bubble on the water."

"That's the tide, and she's swinging at her anchor," explained Hal, almost in despair.

"Are n't we sailing, Phin?"

"No, mum."

“Then what is all that fabric up there for?” demanded Mrs. Maynot, with the air of being deceived by all aboard, and knowing better. “I don’t care to go fast, and am perfectly satisfied,” continued their guest. “It is very exhilarating. I am not at all timid.”

“What shall we do with her?” whispered Hal to Phineas.

“There! I saw the lighthouse disappear. Now, don’t tell me that we are not going,” said Mrs. Maynot, triumphantly. “It is a delightful boat, and very steady.”

“Put up the jib, Phin,” ordered Hal in disgust. He forgot that the anchor was still down.

“No! Don’t put up any more linen! I am sure we don’t need it. We are going very well,” pleaded Mrs. Maynot. Yielding to the gentle breeze, and to a feeling of perfect security, she leaned back her head and closed her eyes.

Quiet reigned upon the "Kittiewink." To undeceive Mrs. Maynot seemed impossible; and if finally possible, cruel. Hal and Non and Trot huddled together in front of the mast, watching the falling tide eddy about the moored boat. Phin sat languidly at the wheel. The mast, being so far forward, and the main-sail with its high peak being up, and the tide being against the wind, made the "Kittiewink" start ahead as if she were adrift, wear around, and perform all sorts of innocent antics about her anchor. This uneasiness did give a feeble impression of moving, that might have been sufficient to cheat a lady with her eyes shut, and ignorant of the sea. For at least a quarter of an hour Mrs. Maynot kept her eyes closed, fearing for her life to open them lest she be taken seasick. The boys kept silent, entering at last into the novel joke. They exchanged glances with merry eyes, and stuffed things into their mouths to keep from laughing.

“Are we in yet?” asked Mrs. Maynot, still not daring to look. “I am sure sailing is not so bad as they say it is. I am not at all frightened. Don’t I behave very well, Phin? Do I interfere with your steering? Am I in your way?”

“Yes’m. Very well, indeed. Not at all. We’re most in.”

“Here we are, Mother,” cried Hal, not being able to stand it another minute.

The swift tide made a gentle ripple as it passed the boat. The sail was up. The boat brought up on her anchor with a little jerk. Of course they had sailed. Mrs. Maynot opened her eyes, raised herself, and looked about. The same scene met her gaze as when she had closed them.

“This is delightful!” she exclaimed enthusiastically. “How quietly you do things! No noise, no bustle. Hal is becoming a very good sailor, is he not, Phineas? Now, tell

me, — did I not behave prettily? I was n't frightened, was I?"

Hypocritically they all assured her that she was the best lady sailor that they had ever had aboard, — which was strictly true, and very satisfactory.

And now came the time for Mrs. Maynot's departure. Phin was to row her ashore, carry her bag, and find her the coach. She kissed the boys good-by tenderly. How motherly she was! How she had cared for them and brought them things to eat, and cooked for them so much better than Phin, and tidied up the boat! Yes, in spite of her nautical deficiencies the boys were sorry to have her go. Trot understood it, and he howled tremendously.

"One more kiss, Hal, my dear son. You will be careful, and do just what Phineas says? There! Must I climb over the peak when I get out?"

CHAPTER X.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

EAGER to escape the river, to court the broad bay and the free Atlantic, the "Kittiewink" started next morning with a mild southerly wind to sail around the Cape to Rockport. During the night a fog-bank had rolled in, but this was dissipated by the insistent sun by nine in the morning. Even at quarter-tide the "Kittiewink" languidly and securely pushed across the bar that introduces Squam River to Ipswich Bay.

The water looked like blue velvet that summer morning. It lapped the white beach daintily. There was not even the smallest swell to shock the most delicate sensitiveness. The ruffling breeze barely distended the sails, and it seemed as if

man had no kinder friend than this unfathomable power, that condescended to repose. Far ahead on the horizon Mount Agamenticus could be faintly seen; behind, the broad beach and the sand dunes receded reluctantly. It was a day in a thousand. "So cool, so calm, so bright," — it made one in love with life, and above all with life upon a yacht. Hal and Non, and even Phineas, admitted that if only Mrs. Maynot could have been with them, all her horror of sailing would have been dissolved in these delights. Unfortunately upon the ocean, to will is not to be.

"We'll be in by noon, if nothing don't happen," said Phineas, hopefully, ungrammatically, and cautiously, after a glance about.

Have you ever noticed seamen's eyes? They are different from ordinary eyes, such as you see, for instance, in the village of Sweet Fern. They are like the eyes of

scouts upon our frontier. They are deep-set, steady, observant. They always look as if they were asking questions, and expecting the clouds, the air, the tide to answer them. They are never off the alert. Their pupils are large, and the eyeball moves with the head. This is a sign of concentrated apprehension, and it gives even the most insignificant man an air of authority when he is upon the deck of a vessel. The seaman's eye is his patent of experience. Phineas Scrod had such eyes, and these were sufficient in times of emergency to control his inexperienced boys. He never could control Trot except by a pat or a stroke. In this respect the skipper and the terrier were a little alike.

"I just as lief we'd take till night. This is immense," said Hal, drinking in the refreshing wind from the cool side of the main-sail.

"I would like to stay out all night."

Non was at the wheel, and felt the necessity of going his captain one better.

Pretty soon Phineas came up on deck. He had now finished his work below. "Keep her up a bit. So, steady."

Phin directed the course, and sat down beside Non in the cock-pit. Trot amused himself by barking at the Mother Carey's chickens (those beautiful sea-birds, supposed by superstitious sailors to be the re-embodied souls of their lost comrades) as they skimmed past the boat, or hopped upon the water, balancing themselves with their fluttering wings, or uttering their peculiar wail, that sounded like the creaking of the main-sheet block. Phineas smelled the air, tried to peer into the secrets of the horizon with his deep, unwavering eyes, and then, to Non's disgust, took the wheel himself, and steered nearer the land. The boys noticed that he consulted the compass frequently, and seemed to be studying the course. This excited their amusement.

“Don’t you know where we are?” asked Hal, with what was meant to be a sarcastic grin.

“I can tell you if you don’t,” said Non, who was still miffed at being asked to resign the wheel.

Phineas did not answer. He stretched out his hand towards the extreme point of Cape Ann. The two boys turned and gazed. The sight did not look peculiarly impressive to them; but the atmosphere that towards Newburyport was lucid even to the uttermost horizon, seemed in the opposite direction to end in indistinctness.

“I don’t see anything,” said Hal, contemptuously, “nor you either.”

“Ay, I hope you won’t,” answered Phineas, devoutly.

But the wind was fair, the sun triumphant, the sea as harmless as a caterpillar. Phin thought that what he feared might blow by, and made no motion to turn back,

and the boys were confident of dining ashore with Mrs. Maynot. Even as they were talking about this, and wondering what they would have for dinner, the mainsail flapped and the jibs rattled; and then the life seemed all at once to be taken out of the sunlight. It was as if the day were stabbed of its buoyancy. An east wind, raw and perverse, suddenly struck the "Kittiewink," diverted it from its course, and chilled its passengers.

"Whew! Didn't that come suddenly!" ejaculated the captain of the "Kittiewink," who ought to have kept his eyes open, and seen the gloom upon the distant water.

As yet, however, the sun was not deprived of its brilliancy; only its heat was gone. Trot shivered, and ran to his master, to cuddle in his lap. The terrier began to wonder why he had ever chosen to go yachting. Indeed, the majority of the party had often wondered too. Of what use was the

little dog? In an emergency he was always in the way. As the wind had headed them off, Phineas took the tack that brought them nearer the shore.

“I guess he is afraid,” said Non, with a superb gesture of fearlessness. “You ought to see *me* at the wheel. *I’d* make her whiz!”

As Non uttered this natural boyish boast, he looked up over the port bow, and suddenly stopped. He seized Hal by the shoulder and turned him about. Hal had been sitting with his back to the bow, and the sight was a revelation.

“What’s that, Phin? What does that mean?” the boys cried out, and jumped into the cock-pit.

Before them arose an ominous line of clouds. They rolled in overlapping circular masses. They were dark and impenetrable. The upper part of the clouds grew lighter and lighter, until it seemed to melt into the blue

sky. The contrast between this apparition and the perfect day was almost terrifying. Even as they looked, the clouds expanded and rolled and sported and chased one another. They advanced with increasing rapidity ; and as they charged, the atmosphere became cold.

“Had n’t we better reef?” asked Hal, with a glorious attempt at caution.

“’T ain’t wind. It’s wuss,” said Phin, slowly.

Like a funeral pall the terrible clouds rolled towards them.

“What is it, Phin?” asked Hal, edging close beside his stanch old friend.

“*It’s fog!*”

Only a sailor knows what the awful meaning of that monosyllable is. Wind he can endure, plenty of it ; sometimes, the more the better. Of great waves he is not distrustful. But when the fog creeps in, and with its dank embrace shuts him out from

all the world, and all the world from him, then the light-hearted fellow thinks of land, of wife and child and God.

“Ha, hum, is that all?” laughed Hal.

“I’ll keep her over to the shore; perhaps ’t won’t reach as fur as there,” said Phin to himself.

Even as the one laughed in his ignorance and the other planned in his hope, the cloud shot forth a monstrous white tongue. It seemed transparent, like a bridal-veil; it leaped forth along the surface of the water and enveloped the boat; it was like a fairy layer of mist, so impalpable and impermanent that a breath might have puffed it away. The “Kittiewink” was sailing in a white shroud. Vision was cut off ahead, behind; and still the sun shone from above, and they could see the blue sky as through a dream.

“Isn’t it beautiful!” cried Hal, standing up.

“No, no!” growled the unæsthetic sail-

ing-master ; “ it ’s wuss nor a school o’ grampusses.”

Then the yacht glided into the opaque bank of white and of purple, and was swallowed by it. At that moment a bell smote upon their tensely strained ears. Phin quickly made a dive below for their unused fog-horn, and blew a long blast. Now, at last, the boys began to understand the terror of being caught at sea in a fog. With faithful regularity the skipper drew out one long mournful blast from the horn. Then they would all listen eagerly for an answer. Hal and Non tried in vain to blow ; but it required the practice gained through many a dangerous day and night upon the Grand Banks, and the well-seasoned lungs of an old salt, for the warning sound to carry far enough to be useful. As yet no answer came to their regular toot. They only heard, or thought they did, the steam fog-whistle from Thatcher’s lights.

"I wonder whar that bell wuz," mused Phin, aloud. "It seemed astern. 'T wan't from Squam; thet's too far off, an' the wind is dead agin it."

The boys began to be uncomfortable. The memory of tales of spectre bells upon fog-laden coasts made them huddle closer together. Non was chilled in his light flannel-suit, yet he hardly dared to go below and get an overcoat. Although Phin had not told him so, he now understood that a few seconds might bring an overhanging prow, a crash, and perhaps the most hopeless of fates, death by collision in a fog at sea.

"To-o-o-t!" bayed Phin, at the unseen within the impenetrable cloud. Then there came a long, deep, solemn answer, the first they had heard.

"We're round the pint!" said Phin, joyfully. "Let off the sheets! I thought so."

"How do you know?" asked the boys.

It seemed incredible that any mortal could pilot them in such a plight; for where they sat in the stern, even the bowsprit was indistinct in the mist.

“Ugh!” said Phin, growing more communicative, and wiping off the drops from his beard. “It’s so thick it’s got stems on it. Look ye here!” turning to his boys. “We’re in the regular vessels’ track now. That’s a Portsmouth steamer. I can take ye safe into Rockport from here. But ye keep yer ears peeled; fishermen and coasters are as thick as dog-fish here.”

As a clincher to this uncomfortable statement, he put the red-painted horn to his lips and blew so loud and long that Hal wondered where all that breath came from. Now an answer came from afar off. But Phin did not notice that. Then a horn sounded nearer. “Blast!” answered Phin in response. “Toot! toot!” interrupted a third. “Hoot! Hoot!” shrieked another. This grim coquet-

ting was carried on for some time, but no vessel came near enough to excite apprehension of danger.

During this time, Trot, who had been utterly neglected, began to be uneasy. He walked up and down the deck from one side to the other. His bright eyes pierced, or seemed to pierce, the gray fog.

“Thy sentinel am I!” sang Hal in derision, pointing at the parading pup.

“Lie down!” commanded Non.

“Let him be,” said Phin; “he don’t do no hurt.” Then he blew his horn again, and in the silence that seemed ten times intensified after the noise, they strained their excited ears to hear.

“I don’t hear anything,” said Hal, decisively; “do you?”

“No,” said Non. “I guess it’s all right.”

Phin nodded doubtfully. At this moment Trot ran up into the bow of the “Kittiewink,” put his forepaws up on the rail,

and peered anxiously into the opaqueness. He begun to utter little whines.

“Shut up, and come aft!” ordered Hal, impatiently.

But the dog, heedless of this command, walked out a couple of feet on the bowsprit and began to bark madly. Every hair on his little body stood up on end.

“What on earth is he up to?” asked Non, nudging Hal. “We can’t hear anything. Can’t you shut him up?”

But Phin stood up with one hand on the wheel, and looked distrustfully ahead. The old sailor knew enough not to disregard the least sign at a time like this.

“Bow-wow-wow-wow! How-now-now!” continued Trot, more furious than ever.

“Shut up, can’t you? Come here, sir!” yelled Hal.

“My God!” cried Phin, above the noises. “Look out! She’s on us!” He gave the wheel a mighty turn, and at the same time

stretched forth his hand and unloosened the painter of the dory from a cleat at his side.

There was a rush as of rapids gurgling over bowlders; then a great cloud rose before them, blacker than the cloud from which it had so stealthily come. Above the "Kittiewink" a huge bow wavered for a moment, as if hesitating whether to spare or to strike. There came the rattling of ropes and chains, the flap of the leach of great sails, the running to and fro of men, then the shivering of canvas.

"Hard down your hellum!" shrieked Phin, at the apparition, with a voice made terrible by fear.

The boys did not utter a cry; the great vessel had come so suddenly upon them. They were paralyzed by the dreadful spectre. Then there was a shock. Had the helmsman not obeyed Phin's shout, the "Kittiewink" would have been cut in two. As it was, the end of the boom of the "Kittie-

wink ” drew a straight line along the hull that overtowered them. Phin had cast the painter of the dory off, for the vessel had shot in between it and him. Men leaned far over the high rail and looked down upon the cockle-shell that one foot more would have sent to the bottom. They looked at it with contempt, as men do at a fly they crush in their hand.

“ Why don’t ye git out the way ? ” sneered one fellow. He spat tobacco juice towards Trot, who went wild with rage at the insult.

“ Pretty close call! You ’d better be keeful next time,” sang out another.

The skipper, the captain of the “ Kittie-wink,” Non, and Trot followed the great three-masted schooner with their eyes until it melted out of sight. They could not answer. A moment — such as one cannot endure without growing very much older, — and the monster had come, and was gone. The demoniac fog had cast its prey at the crush-

ing hull; but a Power that is always too great to be lightly explained had in its own way saved the boys and their boat. They came about, luckily picked up their dory in the schooner's wake, and stood off again.

For what seemed a long time, nobody spoke aboard the "Kittiewink." Then Phin said solemnly: "If it had n't been fur that pup's squeakin' ye would n't 'a' had no pup nor yacht nor nothin'. When he got up an' hollered, I thought there were sonth'n, an' I stood up, an' I seed it comin'; and here we be, — thank the Power and the pup!"

"I think that Mother would have called it — eh — Providence," said Hal, timidly and devoutly. He was much shaken. The boy who was taken from a sick room was trembling in every nerve, and his teeth were chattering like castanets.

"An' she's right," said Phin, authoritatively. "It were both."

“I am so glad I brought him,” said Hal, hugging his little dog.

“Ye ’d better be,” answered Phin, shortly.

So Trot paid his passage on that yachting trip.

“But why did n’t it answer our horn?” asked Hal. “I thought they had to in a fog.”

“Bless your soul! them big coasters loaded with coal or ice don’t care a copper. They ’re just like a ledge. Nothin’ can’t hurt *them*. They gits careless like. Fishermen are skeered to death on ’em and the steamers,” explained Phineas. “All ye have to do is to look out fur ’em; they won’t fur you. It were the closest call I ever had. Nothin’ can’t hurt us now.” Phin ended with that superstitious touch which the seafaring man never casts off.

And his prophecy proved true. Two hours afterwards, without further scare or mishap, the party cast anchor in Rockport

harbor. Phineas had brought them there famously, and was very proud of his feat. He immediately went below to prepare their late dinner.

Pretty soon the fog began to lift a little, so the objects a few hundred feet away could be seen. Just at the edge of the fog-bank a large, rectangular box seemed to be adrift; it bobbed up and down in the gentle swell, and showed green grass and sedge along its sides. What might such a sea-driven box contain? It was enough to excite the curiosity of any well-ordered boy.

“What is that, Hal?” asked Non, pointing it out eagerly.

“Perhaps it’s something valuable. Let’s go and see,” said Hal.

They jumped into the dory lightly, and shoved off. When they came to the box, they continued to wonder what it was. It was about six feet long and four broad, and built so that the sea could easily run through

it. In the middle of it, on top, there was a cover that went on a leather hinge, and was fastened by a wooden button. They turned this cover back and looked in.

“Lobsters, I declare!” exclaimed Hal. “I wonder if they grow here.”

“It isn’t a lobster-pot,” explained Non, with authority. “I know those. You haul them with a line from the bottom. They have got a buoy on the water to mark them. Whew! Aren’t there slews of them here?” He stuck the boat-hook into the large box, and stirred the lobsters about.

“Perhaps it is a lobster-bed,” said Hal, after a moment’s deliberation. He had heard of oyster-beds, and argued that this method of raising lobsters was akin to that.

“Anyway, it’s adrift. I guess it’s all right for us to open it,” suggested Non. “We will only take enough for dinner. There are such a lot of ’em. See them claw!”

It was easily said and easily done. What a lark! — hooking for lobsters, and forbidding them to claw in return, as they were landed in the dory. Absorbed in the exciting sport, the boys, not knowing, or at least not thinking, any better (the two things are not quite the same), fished delightedly for the first course of their dinner.

CHAPTER XI.

WAS IT STEALING ?

To do the two boys justice, we must make it clear that it did not occur to them that they were doing anything wrong when they took the lobsters. Lads brought up in the country, where every apple-orchard is public property, cannot understand the quality of the offence of taking lobsters from a place where they have been carefully stored. Hal and Non thought that it was something like gathering chestnuts from Deacon Jones's favorite grove. It was a lark, an excellent joke, and nothing more. They would not have stolen for their lives.

"There seem to be slews of them," repeated Non, poking the boat-hook about the lobster-car. "See them claw it! I guess we

will take four, — these small ones. Nobody will ever miss them. They don't seem to belong to anybody anyway."

"Won't Phin be surprised?" laughed Hal. "Boiled lobster is n't bad. And then they are so fresh. We had better take another fellow, to be sure of having enough. Catch that one, Non! Let him grab the hook, and then haul him up slowly. Is n't he a beauty? Now we have got enough. What a mag. dinner! Close her up, and let go!" Hal laughed merrily as he gave these orders.

"You've got enough, have ye? I'll give ye enough before I git through with ye! Now I've cotched ye at last!"

The boys had not noticed a dory, with one man in it, that had stopped and had watched them until they had taken the fifth lobster, and were ready to shove off.

"Look here!" continued the strange man, roughly, as he laid a brown hand on

the boys' dory, and glared at them. "I've been layin' fur two weeks fur who's been a stealin' from my car, an' now I cotched ye, I'll take ye up to the perlice fur an example. How many yer got? Five! Git into my dory, an' come along." He reached over and took Hal by the arm with a relentless grip.

"But we did n't mean anything. Please let me go!" said Hal, trying to wrench himself away. "I did n't know that they were yours or anybody's. Take them back! Here!"

"Ah, ye did n't? He, he! Then why hev ye been stealin' my lobsters fur two weeks fur?"

"We have n't, have we, Non? We've just come," explained Hal. "Ow! You hurt me."

"Thet's a likely story. Ye kin tell that to the justice. Come along here, and hurry lively!"

Expostulation and explanation were in vain. The fisherman who had gathered those lobsters, often at the peril of his life, in the surf off that rocky coast, knew that he had a grievance, and meant to push it to its utmost limit. The boys did not suspect that there was a severe penalty for the offence which they, in the careless exuberance of their spirits, had committed. There is a line which is too loosely drawn in boyhood. It lies between the *meum* and the *tuum*. Often the funniest pranks of boys at school, and even those of college students, are nothing but vulgar thefts, which youth itself ought not to excuse, and which, had a newsboy done the same, would have resulted in a term in the House of Correction. It is more than a lark, — it is stealing, to take grapes from another person's arbor without his knowledge and consent ; to walk off with sign-boards, or even to take lobsters from another's pot. This may be a goody-goody

truism, but it is not too old to mention again, for in the stern eyes of the law, larceny, of whatsoever kind, committed for whatsoever cause and at whatsoever age, is a penitentiary offence.

Hal and Non had for the first time in their lives stumbled into the power of a police court, and at a place where no influence could save them. They were arrested by one who had no leniency for a prank because it was committed by a boy. It was, the rather, a good time, the old fisherman thought, to check these youths, midway, and forcibly, in their depraved career. The owner of the lobster-car, as he compelled the boys to enter his unsavory dory, felt that he was performing a good service to the community in stopping the aggravating series of petty thefts to which he and others had been so long exposed. That he had caught the wrong boys never once entered his head. Why should it ?

"You are not going to take us to the police station, are you?" pleaded Hal, in a humble tone. "Please take us to the yacht. We have just come in on the 'Kittiewink.' We had a very narrow escape in the fog. It's over there!"

Before he spoke, the fog had set in thicker than ever, and had completely obscured the "Kittiewink." In their eagerness, Hal and Non pointed to the wrong place. They were so earnest in their attempts to convince their captor, that he rowed in the direction to which they pointed for a few minutes. He did so, grumbling.

"It ought to be here. Oh, Phin! *Phin!*" But the thick fog did not carry to their skipper, busy over pots and kettles, the agonized voices. The lobster man returned, swearing.

"You boys are a bad lot. You can't fool me no more. Ye kin tell the justice about yer yacht."

With this he turned his boat and rowed surlily toward the town, towing Hal's dory behind. The two boys sat and looked at each other in consternation. This was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and they had eaten nothing since breakfast.

"What can we do?" whispered Non to Hal. Tears were rising to his eyes. This was worse than shipwreck. What would Dr. Plaster say to this disgrace? How could Mrs. Maynot bear it? Why was not Phin there to protect them? What a terrible dishonor was this, to be arrested for stealing!

"Don't ye be a whisperin' now, ye young villains!" ejaculated the lobster-man. "Ye can keep it fur the judge."

"Oh, don't take us there! It will kill Mother!" Hal, big boy as he was, now burst into tears. The picture of his mother pleading for him in the police court was too much for him. "We did n't mean any harm, — truly we did n't. We thought you

could take them like apples at home. We never took a lobster before. We never saw Rockport before; we never want to again. Please let us go. We'll pay for them, twice over, and glad to."

But the fisherman's heart hardened within him. He had caught them at it, and he had made up his mind to punish the first fellow he found meddling with his car. In this he was right.

At last the dory grated against the stone pier. The gray granite, streaked faintly with iron-rust, seemed forbidding to the two boys. How inhospitable these huge blocks looked! If only one could topple over and crush them, they felt that it would be better than being sent to prison. Hal remembered copying, about fifty times in his copy-book at school, "Death is better than disgrace." He now began to understand what the sentiment meant.

"Come along, my little thieves," said the

lobster-man, as he clambered up and held the painters of the two dories.

“We are *not* thieves!” Hal stamped the granite coast, pale with the insult.

“Tell that to the jedge, young feller! As I cotched ye at it, it will go pretty hard. Six months, mebbe a year.”

Tremblingly the boys scrambled up. The man roughly took each by the arm.

“Ouch! We’ll come,” screamed Non. “Let me go!”

“Not by a jug-full, me splutterin’ thief!” He clutched them all the tighter, and for very shame they hung their heads and walked along. It seemed to do the old man good to call them thieves.

“Wha’ che got there, Mose?” asked a hand on the fish-wharf.

“Two young uns I cotched hookin’ lobsters from my car. I’ve been layin fur ’em fur two weeks. D’ ye know ’em?”

The word spread among the hands rapidly.

In a moment the boys were surrounded by a dozen curious and hooting men.

“Maybe them’s boarder boys,” suggested one.

“They aint well enough dressed,” answered another.

“They look mighty mean,” commented a third.

“Look out, they’re goin’ to run from ye, Mose!”

“Hang on to ’em sharp!”

“You’ll steal again, will ye?”

Broken-hearted, silent, weeping, frightened, angry, and outraged, the two boys listened to these taunts. What had they to say? Deny? They could not. The five lobsters which the crowd passed around condemned them. Who would believe the innocence of their hearts? By the time they came to the police station, there must have been twenty men and as many boys in their wake. Mose was proud of himself, and of

the attention he attracted. He rehearsed the details of his capture over and over again, as one loafer after another joined him. It was an eventful day for Rockport.

“An’ look at ’em,” he invariably ended ; “the innercent airs they’s a puttin’ on, when I cotched them at it, high-handed, with five in the dory an’ jiggin’ fur more.”

Now it happened that the justice was away, and would not be back until three o’clock. With alacrity, a policeman took Hal and Non by the shoulders and shoved them up some high steps and into a narrow room with grated windows ; then he locked the door. The crowd without laughed and congratulated and commented, and gradually dispersed, promising themselves the pleasure of returning at four to see how the justice would handle this case. The boys were left to themselves in the town cell, the saddest creatures in the whole State. How could they get word to Mrs. Maynot ? How to

Phin? They called, — no one answered. They cried aloud, — a voice told them to shut up. Only an old pitcher half full of tepid water and a cracked glass were there to relieve their hunger and thirst. The sin-stained and the tobacco-reeking cell had a strong effect upon these sensitive natures. How many innocent prisoners have been tainted by such thoughtless and harsh treatment! Sobbing, distrustful of themselves and of all the world, the boys threw themselves upon the hacked bench. Then followed the sullen despair, which is so apt to take possession of the heart of a misunderstood and wronged lad.

“I guess we must be very wicked,” said Hal, after a moody silence. “I didn’t know we were.”

“We aint any wickeder than the feller that took us up, anyway,” answered Non, decisively, much to the surprise of his companion.

“*He* ought to be chopped into little pieces and cooked into a chowder,” blurted Hal, gloomily.

But even this vigorous sentiment did not unlock their prison door.

“I wonder what all that crowd means, Louise,” asked Mrs. Maynot, as she watched an incoherent mass of hooting humanity disappearing around the corner. By her side stood a tall, beautiful girl of sixteen.

“Perhaps it’s some game, or a big cod,” answered the girl, in an idle way. In her limited experience she knew of nothing but baseball, a piece of granite, or a fish that could move Rockport to such a state of exhilaration. Besides, she was thinking of the fog, of the boys, and of the “Kittiewink.”

“I do hope the boys have n’t started,” said Mrs. Maynot, continuing the former

conversation. "I am sure that Phineas is too careful. I have a great respect for Phin."

They were interrupted at this moment by a small boy, who rushed up to the piazza excitedly.

"Why, Mortimer! What is the matter, child?" asked his mother, a summer lady, starting up from another part of the piazza.

"Oh, it's such fun!" shouted the boy. "They've caught two little thieves, and are taking them to the lock-up. I saw them, I did. They looked awful wicked. They caught 'em at it, a feller said."

"How dreadful!" cried the chorus of well-bred ladies.

"I'm going to the trial. They say it is at four," continued the small boy. "Mayn't I go, Mamma?"

"How can you want to go to such a wicked place, Mortimer, my dear?"

“ But it would be such fun ! ” insisted the child.

Now, Mrs. Maynot was as tender-hearted as she was timid, and as benevolent as she was maternal. In her own village of Sweet Fern, and beyond it, she had done a noble, unselfish work among the poor and wicked. Her heart was immediately touched by this account. Although she was a stranger, it was her instinct to take the case upon her own shoulders, and especially because it concerned boys. Who knew what influence she might have, — what life she might possibly turn to good and usefulness ? So she said, —

“ We are not doing anything. I think I will hunt up the jail, and have a talk with those children. I suppose they must be very wild. Perhaps I can help a little. Would you like to come, Louise ? ” For she thought that perhaps the sight of that pure face might do those poor boys more good than any of her sermons.

How many summer boarders take the trouble to interest themselves in the poor and the vicious of the place which they choose for their vacation home? Not so many that Mrs. Maynot's visit to the police court did not excite remark at the boarding-house; and the lady who was mother to the boy Mortimer thought she would go too, — it would be quite a novelty, she said. But Louise Concord could not go. A telegram from her mother had called her to Penny-lunkport, suddenly; and her trunks were packed for the four o'clock train.

“I will see that you get there in time,” said Mrs. Maynot, consulting her watch. “It is only a little after two, now. That will give us an hour with the poor little thieves.”

“It wouldn't do for me to miss the train,” said Louise, doubtfully, “Mother worries so. I think I'd better not try.”

“I'm afraid you can't see the boys,

ma'am," said the policeman, politely, "without an order from his Honor. Be you anything to them?"

"Oh, no. I only wished to talk to them, and see if I could help them," said Mrs. Maynot, greatly disappointed.

"They're pretty hard cases. They've been yellin' and screamin'. I don't believe you could do them no good. The justice will be here about four, and then they'll come up," returned the policeman.

"Well, I am sorry," sighed Mrs. Maynot. "I will see you off to your train, Louise, and then come back. I have n't anything in particular to do. My boys are not here, and I must not give these poor creatures up so easily."

"What a nice lady!" ejaculated the policeman to himself, as the visitors reluctantly walked away.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAW AND THE LOBSTER.

WHEN Phineas Scrod came up on deck to call the boys to dinner, they had utterly disappeared, and what is more, their dory had disappeared with them. Phineas was at a dead loss. What could he do in this dense fog without a dory? He waited half an hour, and still they did not turn up. Evidently they had gone out rowing, and had lost themselves. But as the harbor is so very small, and the entrance so narrow, Phin did not begin by worrying. Still, after an hour he began to be very much troubled. Rockport was an old stamping-ground of his. He had fished out of there five years in his youth, and he knew every inch of the harbor, the town, and almost all of its

fishing inhabitants. At last he could stand it no longer. He put up the main-sail, slipped the anchor, which he could not hoist alone, tied a buoy to the cable so as to find it again, and sailed to the wharves. It was about four o'clock when he tied up to a stone pier and climbed ashore. The first thing he did was to inquire for the boys from the men who were fishing upon the wharf.

"We haint seen yer boys, Cap'n," said one, with a kind of attempt at comfort. "Maybe they 've landed on the beach. But we seen two youngsters hauled up fur stealin' lobsters from Mose Clawson's car. They 're in the police station now. There's the dory they come in, way down there."

Phineas glanced at the dory curiously, and started with a muttered exclamation, for he recognized it as the tender of the "Kittiewink." He was about to say that those were his boys, when he remembered

that it would not redound to the glory of the boat, or to his master or himself, to acknowledge any connection with a lobster "steal." Therefore he choked his exclamation just in time.

"Did you say it were Mose Clawson's?"

"Ay, ay!" came the ready answer.

"Old Mose?" asked Phin.

"Yes, the old man. Young Mose was lost two year ago in the 'Saucy Loo.' Wan't that the time?" turning to the crowd for confirmation. A mournful nod was the general response.

But Phineas did not wait for any more information; he had more than enough as it was. When he turned the corner he started on a run, if his waddling jog could be called a run, to the police station.

"Them danged boys hev been monkeyin' with the car fur the fun of it, an' hev been ketched. If I git there in time, I guess I kin ontackle 'em; but if I don't, I'll bet they're goners."

In a few minutes he burst into the crowded police-court, breathless and determined.

“Now, young men, what have you to say for yourselves?”

The justice, a kindly, square-cut man, who had once been a foreman in the granite quarry, lifted up his spectacles and looked severely at the two lads on the other side of the railing. The Rockport court-room was crammed. The depredations on different lobster-cars had been the talk of the fishing section of the community for some weeks. This was as exciting as if mackerel had struck off the coast. Opposite to the justice stood the boys' accuser. In a basket on the table the five condemning lobsters were snugly laid. The poor things were dying slowly, the least regarded victims of this unlucky escapade.

Before either of the boys could summon courage to face this uncompromising crowd,

or even to answer intelligibly for themselves, a shriek startled the court. A feminine form flung itself past the staring crowd, past the startled lobster-man, and descended upon the neck of the taller of the two boys.

“Oh, my son! my son! my innocent, outraged son! what does this mean?”

Hal, who had prayed that his mother might come to his deliverance, now when she did come, shrank back abashed. He was innocent and he was guilty; and in so far as he was guilty, he hardly dared to look his mother in the face.

“Stand aside, madam!” said the justice, courteously, when the first flurry of recognition was over. “We are in the midst of important evidence and valuable testimony. I shall have to interrogate you next if you presume to be the mother of the prisoners at the bar.”

The eloquence of the justice was much thought of in the town, and inevitably

commanded a respectful hearing. A stir followed his remark.

“Sir, this is my son. You have made a mistake. He has n’t done anything. I demand that he be released immediately.”

Mrs. Maynot, made brave by the rights of maternal protection, faced the justice unflinchingly, and flashed her demand at the court as if she were an empress.

“But I cotched him a-takin’ of ’em *Thar they be!*” Mose Clawson pointed in a shamefaced way at the basket and the unlucky lobsters. He felt uncomfortable before this fine lady.

“Harry, my son,” — Mrs. Maynot turned upon her first and only born a look of utter confidence, — “tell them it is a vile slander. You did not take these lobsters, did you?”

The people craned their heads to listen. Instead of the word of innocence which the lady expected, her own Hal flushed, and evaded her gaze.

“I — that is — I did n’t mean to,” he stammered. If ever a thief looked guilty he did.

“I think the law had better take its course,” said the justice, tenderly.

“Why, Harry! Harry, my boy, what do you mean?” pleaded Mrs. Maynot, gently, as if she were reasoning with an insane person. That the dreadful charge might be true never occurred to the poor woman. She repeated: “Say you did n’t, Harry,” in a tender voice.

The rough crowd were moved; even the justice winked. But law was law, and lobsters were lobsters, and the two facts confronted each other hopelessly.

“Avast there!” shouted a stentorian wheeze. Puffing and blowing, Phineas Scrod plunged up to the bar of justice as if he were about to jump from a spring-board into ten feet of water.

“Wagh! wagh! wagh! Yeiough!”

Sharp, staccato barks at the same instant pierced the court-room.

The whole court turned at the unseemly duet. Hal and Non gave a mutual start, and arose from their seats. Mrs. Maynot greeted the two interrupters with a cry of joy.

“I’ll be blowed if the pup haint followed me unbeknownst,” thought Phin, excitedly, as he ploughed through the crowd; then he forgot Trot entirely.

“Them did n’t steal no lobsters, yer Honor,” cried Phin, bringing his fist down with such a bang upon the table that the lobsters hopped as if they were quite alive again. “What are ye all thinkin’ on? Why, Mose, me old mate,” said Phin, holding out his hand in affected surprise, “don’t ye rik-leckt Phin Scrod, who saved ye that mornin’ on George’s? Them’s my boys, them are. Thet’s their ma. Their pa’s are the first citizens in Sweet Fern. D’ye think, yer

Honor, thet a *gentleman* would steal lobsters? I cal'late not. I came ashore to pay fur 'em. I pay all the bills, I do, an' I find my boys, *my boys*, dragged off their innercent yacht into the perlice station of old Rockport, my old home. Thet ain't friendly of you, Mose; is it, mates?" Phin turned to the court-room full of faces that at his impassioned words had undergone an easy change of sympathy. These honest fishermen could understand the arguments of one of their own kind. A low "no" thrilled through the room.

"How much do them small lobsters come to?" asked Phin, following up his advantage, and weighing one lobster after another in his hand critically. "Two cents apiece, or three? They aint fit fur nothin' but bait, noway."

"Nothin'," said Mose Clawson, uncomfortably enough. "I did n't understand the case. I thought they wus the chaps who 'se a ben stealin' these two weeks."

“As we jess come in in the fog two hours ago, I rather think yer all off,” said Phin, sternly. “Did n’t they tell ye on it?”

“Ye-s,” admitted the man, slowly; “but I thought —”

“Do you mean to push this charge any further, Mr. Clawson?” interrupted the justice, benignly. Then, as if to give Mose time to think about it, he added, “I must call this irrelevant court to order.”

“No, no, yer Honor,” spoke up Mose Clawson, feeling that he, if any one, was the guilty party: “I give ’em the lobsters, an’ more, if they want ’em.”

This generous sentiment was warmly applauded.

“Then the prisoners are discharged,” said the justice, decidedly, rising from his honorable chair.

“I thought it was just like — well, like — picking huckleberries,” spoke up Hal, loudly, anxious at the last moment to polish up his

sullied name. The crowd laughed at this, and somebody cheered; the boys were surrounded, and then the court-room began to thin out gradually.

“I never saw a *green* lobster before,” said a summer boarder. It was she who was the mother of the boy Mortimer, and who had accompanied her teasing son and Mrs. Maynot to this den of destruction. “It seems to be a new kind. Ours in Brooklyn are always red,” she added distinctly.

In the roar that followed this observation the summer lady, a little frightened, hurried herself and her idol out of the court-room.

Just then there came a shrill yell, followed by a succession of terrible shrieks from the prisoner's bar. The hum of explanation and the bustle of departure suddenly ceased. All eyes were turned to the bar of justice. What would come next?

There upon the table was Trot (and how he came there nobody could tell ; he had been unnoticed for once in his life), yelling and waltzing madly. What was supposed to be a dead lobster was firmly attached by one claw to the dog's ear, and reaching with its second nipper for some other convenient spot on Trot's anatomy. The more the dog danced, the closer the creature clung ; and the closer he clung, the louder his victim howled. Poor Trot was never so frightened in all his eventful life.

Mose Clawson, who in a dazed way was telling Phin all about it, now jumped to the rescue. He knew very little about strange dogs, but much about his own lobsters. He seized his property deftly by the back, and lifted it in the air. To his consternation, the terrier came too. Mrs. Maynot and Hal, thinking this a wanton piece of cruelty towards their pet, and perhaps a deep-laid conspiracy, dashed forward to do something.

But the lobster-man, seeing that this was his only chance to retrieve himself in the eyes of his wronged mate and of the boy's mother, grasped the offending claw in his two hands and tore it forcibly apart. With a final squeal Trot fled into his master's arms for comfort, and stayed there the rest of the afternoon. Thus it happened, as it so often does in the great world, that sentence was passed and executed, but upon the innocent; and the unlucky lobsters had their revenge.

While Mrs. Maynot was insisting upon the smallest particulars of the boys' adventure, and Hal was doing his best to satisfy her, Non interrupted his companion's narrative. He had stood it as long as he could.

"I hope Louise Concord won't know. I don't see her. Where is she?"

"Her mother has just telegraphed for her to go to Kennylunkport. She has not

been gone half an hour," answered Mrs. Maynot.

Non heaved a sigh of relief. He felt that he could not bear to fall in any degree in the estimation of that beautiful girl. He had rather chase her and miss her in this aggravating way, over the New England coast, all summer.

"It's too bad," said Hal, emphatically. "I should have liked to take her out to sail." Hal now began to feel himself much abused, and was ready for consolation from any source, even from a pretty cousin.

"Please don't tell her," pleaded Non, timidly. "I never was in prison before."

"Of course I won't, you foolish boy. Nobody shall know," said Mrs. Maynot, patting his arm.

"*I* will," said Hal, mischievously.

"If you do, I'll fight you, Harry Maynot, and never speak to you again!" flashed Non, squaring off.

But Phineas spoiled this possible quarrel, by saying forcibly: "You youngsters had better leave the pervisioning of the boat to me, arter this. If it had n't been me old mate, ye'd have been dished." Good humor beamed from every wrinkle on his face. He was delighted at the happy ending of what had promised to be a very serious escapade. "I guess ye'd better ask permission when ye want anything thet don't belong to ye, arter this," added Phin, with a light voice and a grave look.

"It all comes from yachting," sighed Mrs. Maynot; "sailing has a very deleterious effect."

At this, Phineas Scrod bowed assentingly. Mose Clawson, seeing his old mate nod, bowed with a grave inclination, too. Neither of them knew just what kind of an effect she meant, but they felt that the sentiment had a market value.

With gracious tact Mrs. Maynot changed

the subject as they walked along to her boarding-house. She said it was the only one in town that was not full. But the landlady's daughter was forty-five, so Hal regarded this boarding-house without enthusiasm.

CHAPTER XIII.

ADRIFT.

“IF yer ma is goin’ hum to-day, the wind is from the nor’ard, the fog is all blown out to sea, and we’d better start by nine an’ make a reach right down to Marblehead.”

Phin disguised as well as he could his impatience to get back to their starting-place. There he felt secure. With his boys under his sole authority, untroubled by a mother’s natural but none the less unintelligent worry, he felt sure that the rest of the summer would prove uneventful and safe. Would that he never saw Squam River or Rockport again! They are pretty places, and have nothing the matter with them; but they had been unfortunate for Phin. To have been all but sent to the bottom in

a fog, and barely to have escaped the clutches of Concord Reformatory, was enough for one summer. Marblehead was the scene of the "Kittiewink's" glory; there he and his were respected, and there his heart yearned to be.

When Mrs. Maynot heard their decision her heart sank. She felt as if away from her protection the boys would go to their graves. But her solicitude yielded to good-sense, and she made no trouble in the matter. Her little outing was already over. She had improved it to the best of her ability; and although a few mishaps had occurred under her nautical administration, she was sure she had saved her boys from worse, and that the balance was well in her favor. The boys did not dispute her, for they were too eager to be up and off. The exhilarating breeze called them, and the prospect of an unchaperoned sail hurried them away. Good-bys, tears, advice, and

all necessary adjuncts of departure were cut short by Hal's impatience. Phin had not come. He sent word that he had the deck to swab down. He dared not face those last moments.

"You will mind Phin, will you not, Hal, my dear?" Mrs. Maynot repeated this several times as the boys were getting into their dory.

"Oh, yes, yes, Mother! of course I will."

"And you won't put up too much cloth? Don't put up that high sail at the top of the mast, to please your Mother!"

"The gaff top-sail?" asked Hal, with a touch of mannish superiority. "You don't understand sails, Mother. Phin says it is necessary for running down."

"I suppose I must bear it then," sighed Mrs. Maynot. "At any rate you will be careful. Remember that you are not very strong. Non, you see that Hal doesn't over-exert

himself! Don't pull too many lines. Above all, have plenty to eat. Good-by, dear! Good-by!"

The mother's white handkerchief fluttered sadly from the grim stone-pier, even after the "Kittiewink" had made her westward turn around the headland out of sight.

That evening the boys took supper at the Neptune Club. This was a rare luxury, that could be indulged in only on occasions. It was the first time they had been at the Club since that memorable yacht-race, and they both craved the recognition that they felt was due them. They were not disappointed. The Club was full, and the talk was of nothing but boats. Go Gresham was there, and introduced his friends to the leading Neptune yachtsmen. As it happened, a club-race had not been sailed since that great occasion, and it was still interesting to talk over the performance of the "Kittiewink." She was praised to Hal's content. Her

ability and speed in rough weather had evidently made quite an impression upon the fitful yachting memory. When Hal and Non received an invitation from the owner of the famous "Bazoon" to assist in a forty-footer race the following week, their cup of pride was filled to overflowing.

It was late when they reluctantly made their way down the club-landing to their own dory. Both strutted a little, it is to be feared, even in the dark. The night was black as jet. A fine drizzle was falling softly. Lights flickered feebly from the yachts in the harbor.

"Jump in!" said Hal. "I'll shove her off. You row this time. That's the 'Kittie-wink.'"

Hal unfastened the painter, leaped lightly after his friend, and gave the dory a push from the club float. The wind, as usual, had changed. The tide was running out. Tinkle! Tinkle! From ship to ship the

bells sounded faintly, as if muffled in the mist. Each bell struck six times.

"Eleven o'clock!" said Hal, with a sense of importance in recognizing the sailor's method of computing time. "Hurry up! Why don't you row?"

"I can't find any oars," answered Non, groping from one side to the other.

The two boys searched the boat. No oars! Impossible! Gone! Without oars! Adrift! It was too true. They were afloat with nothing to propel their boat. The dory began to drift slowly away from the landing. The boys did not realize at first what the situation meant. They were too inexperienced to guess that oars, though laid ever so carefully on the solid thwarts, might be "borrowed" by some unscrupulous prowler about the harbor.

"What shall we do?" asked Non, unconcernedly. It seemed so easy to get ashore in some way.

"Holler, I guess," said Hal, after some leisurely thought.

He illustrated his suggestion by a loud call. Non joined in with a shrill cry; but the air was thick, and they had already drifted a good distance. The sound fell back deadened.

"Howl!" said Hal, hopefully.

They howled a great deal, and when they had done howling they began again. The harbor was full of yachts, but none answered the startled boys.

"Yell!" commanded Captain Hal.

This time a thunderous shriek was the result.

"Shut up your noise!" answered a voice, from a boat not far away.

"But we're drifting out!" shrieked Hal.

"You can't fool me! Go to bed!" came back the sneering answer.

"But we've lost our oars! We're adrift!"

"You've lost your head!" called a sleepy sailor.

"There's Trot!" said Hal, suddenly. "I hear him bark. Trot! Phineas! Phin! Phin *Scrod*! 'Kittiewink' ahoy! We're drifting o-ut!"

The cries of the boys smote fainter and fainter upon the waters of Marblehead Harbor. They stopped for very fright.

"We are going out to sea!" sobbed Non.

"Why, we can't go out to sea!" expostulated Hal.

But Non was right. The inexorable tide, more relentless than the storied polyp of the Scandinavian shore, had dragged the unmanageable dory beyond the headland.

There are few experiences more terrible than being adrift in an open boat in an open sea. Now and then the newspapers record the picking up of an emaciated fisherman by a passing vessel, barely in time

to save his life, — sometimes too late ; and always there is a sad story of pain and privation. But if one must be cast adrift, there is nothing better than a Swampscott dory for such a purpose. Our two boys were in such a boat ; it was thirteen feet long, and had a flat bottom, from which its sides flared outward. The dory was one of the best of its kind. Phin had chosen it. In a very high sea, to the experienced sailor, the dory is almost as safe as any craft afloat. A dory, as the saying runs, “ can sail in a dewdrop or in a nor’easter.” But a dory without oars !

Fear had cowed the boys, and they crouched side by side on the grating at the bottom. Hal held Non by the hand, while Non rested one arm on Hal’s shoulder. At first neither spoke. It seemed hours to them since they had floated off, yet it was scarcely ten minutes.

“ Let’s give one more yell ! ” urged Hal.

“I guess we can fetch 'em this time. They *must* hear us !”

“I can't !” sobbed Non. “It's too terrible !”

The boy put his head on the seat and shut his teeth tightly to stifle his tears. He was ashamed of himself ; but many a man in no worse position has yielded more weakly to his fears.

“I'll try now,” Non chattered, after a few more brave gulps.

They stood up in the dory, two helpless waifs, clinging to each other, and shouted and hallooed until a rough swell toppled them over. Then they sank, exhausted and terrified, upon the dory's bottom, and clasped each other for comfort and warmth.

It seems strange that no one on board the “Kittiewink” had heard their cries. Skipper Scrod was expecting them ; but being tired with his day's work, he had gone

below, and there fallen into a doze. The wind carried the agonizing shouts in the opposite direction; the denseness of the atmosphere deadened the sound, and perhaps fright had changed the tones of the familiar voices. Phin slept on and heard no shrieks.

But Trot paced the deck restlessly. The little shaggy dog, no larger than a good-sized cat, felt the responsibility of his position. He was on duty. Trot was "the watch" of the "Kittiewink." Now and then, when thoughts of his master crossed his mind, he gave little yelps; but when he heard the sound of oars, he listened attentively. If the voices were unfamiliar he barked loudly. Phin was quite accustomed to hearing Trot's voice on all occasions. The later it grew, the more impatient was Trot. He ran to and fro along the deck, and peered eagerly through the gloom. Suddenly he heard a cry. Trot stood atten-

tively. The cry was followed by another. Was it his master's voice? Trot whined, and hopped about in his excitement. Another shout, penetrating through the mist, settled his conviction. He now yelped madly. Why did the skipper not wake? Another cry! Whether Trot thought it a summons, or whether he had an instinct for rescue, who knows? Who can interpret a dog? The terrier jumped into the water, and with gurgling yelps disappeared.

One would have thought that his narrow escape at the club races would have warned this courageous little fellow of the madness of his feat. But, like all dogs that do a wild thing successfully, he supposed that he would be taken care of, — would of course be picked up, as he was before. Men might sink, — inferior things! — but it was clear that dogs came out all right somehow.

Paddling with all his might, Trot followed

his master's voice, which in the drizzle had entirely died away to human ears.

"Help! Help!" Hal gave one more desperate shriek.

"Yap, yap! Aioow — ow!" gurgled the swimming dog.

"What's that, Non?" The boys listened, with heads close together.

"Help!" Hal made one more mighty effort. It took his last bit of courage and strength.

"Yap, yap, yap! It's your little chap!" came the response, this time in unmistakable tones.

"It is Trot!" cried Hal, joyously. "He's followed us. There, Trot! Good dog, sir!"

The recognition was mutual. Trot barked as furiously as he could, with his mouth full of salt water. In a very few minutes the little dog had overtaken the dory, and was lifted, just as he expected to be, from the

cold water into his master's cuddling arms. But this time the comfort was all the other way. The boys felt that they were not deserted. With Trot, there seemed to come a message from home, courage, cheer, and company. They patted Trot, and kissed him and blessed him, and took heart to look their situation sensibly in the face. Trot occupied himself in lapping the eyes and ears of the two boys with his moist tongue, and conscientiously shook himself in their faces. Even this salt shower comforted Hal, who, still feeling the responsibility of captaincy, said, —

“I don't suppose it's any use to holler any more.” Then, after a little hesitation, he went on: “Say, Non, old fellow, do you think we are going to die? It's cold enough, and dark enough too.”

Non did not trust himself to answer. He thought of his home, of his father and brothers. He could not speak just then.

The boys were hushed with the solemnity of their danger. What good could talking do? Already they had drifted beyond Marblehead Point. The tide took the light dory between Cat Island and the Beacon in a straight course for Tinker's Ledge. The wind breezed up westerly, and pushed seaward upon the flaring side of the boat, as if it were bent upon the boys' destruction. With the rising wind, the mist disappeared. The sky cleared, and the stars shone mockingly. The steady, white light from the receding point glittered like an eye that had no pity. As the boys strained their eyes toward the impenetrable horizon, they caught the twin lights of Baker's Island.

"That's Baker's!" said Hal, authoritatively. He was pleased to recognize a friend.

"There's a vessel!" cried Non, looking eagerly in the opposite direction. "Phin

says they carry a red lantern at night. See! Perhaps they 'll pick us up."

But the red light laughed at them with its even, ruddy glow. Can Egg Rock light pick up a castaway?

To one at sea for the first time, on a clear night, off this shore bristling with light-houses, the sight is as exciting as it is dreamy. Had the boys been safe on some stout boat, they would have yielded to the romance of the situation. As it was, the excitement and the novelty of their position for the moment blinded them to its peril.

"One, two, three, four, five, — there it shines again! I wonder where that light is. Now it's out. Look quick!"

Non had discovered the beautiful Eastern Point light, whose ruby lantern flashed sympathetically upon them.

But soon the diversion of discovery ceased. The boys snuggled closer together. The ex-

perience was damp and monotonous, and it began to grow dreadful. The *clung, chunk* of the waves underneath the flat dory — a pleasant sound on a bright day, with oars in hands — terrified them now.

“Say, Non!” Hal resolutely interrupted his own gloomy thoughts. “I guess Papa is asleep now. Your father is in bed, too, unless he’s called out; and my mother — I’m glad *she* does n’t know. Say! Do you think God knows?”

Non bowed his head reverently. “Perhaps this is a punishment,” he ventured to say. “Perhaps we ought n’t to have gone racing. I know my father would n’t have liked it.”

Hal thought of his mother with a heavy heart. He could n’t bear to speak of her. But a bright thought occurred to him. “It could n’t have been very wrong, because we saved so many lives.”

“That’s so. It turned out all right,”

said Non. "But we did n't know we were going to do it. I say, Hal, do you think it would be the thing to pray?"

At the last word Trot pricked up his ears.

"No; you pray first!" said Hal.

"No, you! you're captain!"

During this little settlement of precedence Trot had gravely mounted the seat, and sitting on his haunches, had put his forepaws on the rail of the dory, and his black nose between his paws. He was bent in a solemn attitude. He had always done this at family prayers at home. Trot had missed the usual morning devotions on shipboard, and at the familiar sound of that sacred word he was glad to take his accustomed position.

Hal watched this performance gloomily. He could not laugh, — it reminded him of home. He burst into tears. "Dear God —" he began. Then he broke down. "You go on, Non," he sobbed, "I can't."

Non was much moved. "I can't think

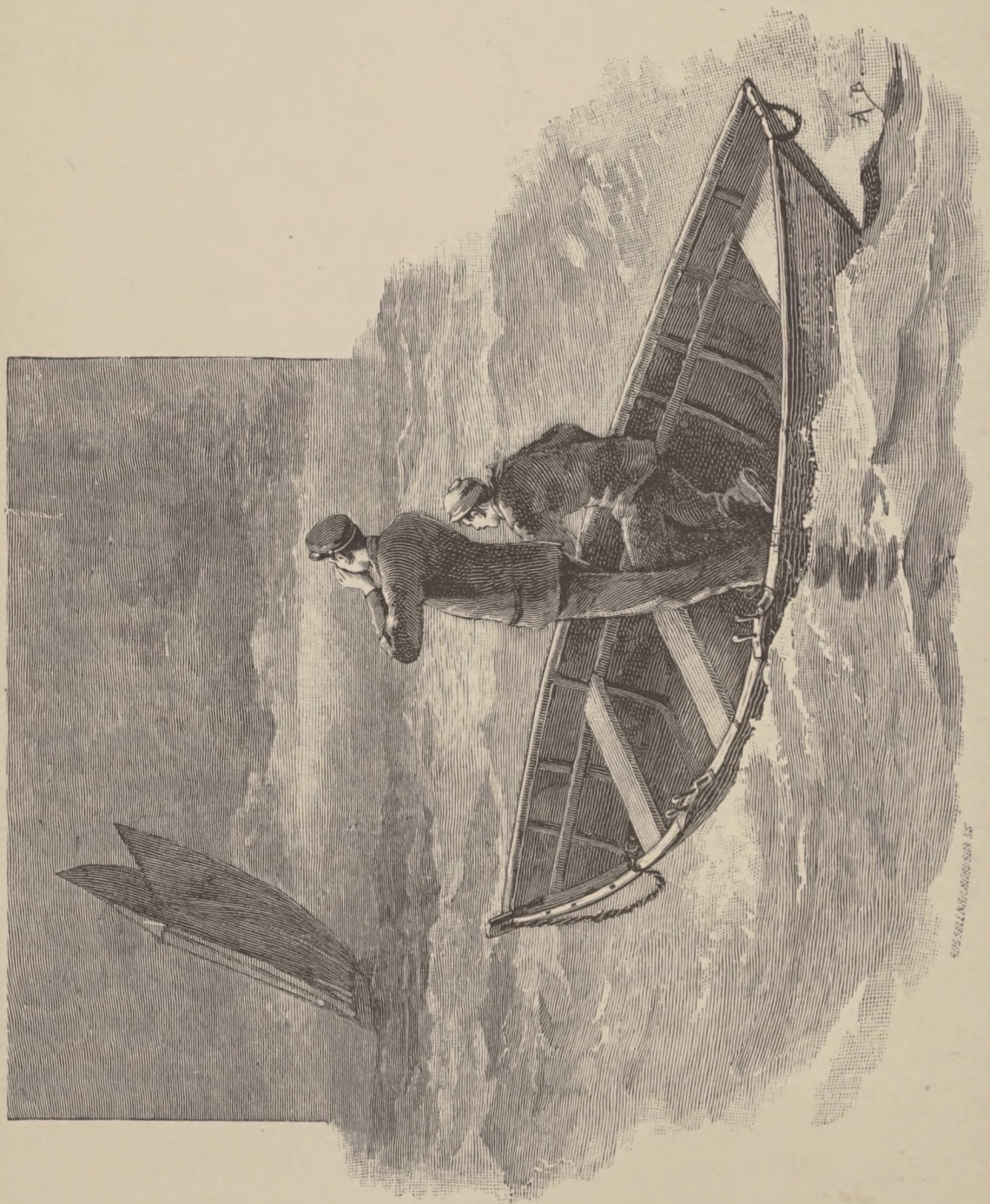
what to say. Father never taught me how to say prayers in a place like this.—Dear Father,” he began very slowly, “we’re two boys, all alone in a dory, and very dangerous. Help us, and save us. Amen!”

Trot, released from his religious duties at the last word, bounded and barked vociferously.

“That wasn’t much of a prayer,” said Non, apologetically; “but I guess it will do as well as any. I’ve done lots better praying—inside. *What’s that?*”

He seized Hal by the arm and turned him about. They peered into the darkness, which was broken by a huge shadow; what it was, their untrained vision could not at first make out.

Suddenly the dim outlines of sails took shape, looming straight over them. A red light flashed very near. The big vessel was making directly for the dory, bowling along on the starboard tack, unconscious of the



little boat before her. So silently had she approached that the fact seemed a mysterious answer to the broken prayers of the boys. They trembled in a kind of awe. At first their throats could make no sound. But Trot had no such religious feelings, and he barked vigorously. However, the creaking of canvas, the slatting of spars, the clanking of chains, the swish of the parted waters, brought them to their senses.

“Hullo!”

“Bow-wow!”

“Ship ahoy!” shrieked the three in chorus.

“Hullo! Yap-yap! Ahoy, there!”

“What’s that?” came a gruff voice, quite clear upon the night air.

“Hold on! Stop! Take us in! Yowl! Ye-owl! We’re adrift! Hold on!”

Then came the moment of anxiety and expectation. Would the vessel pass by? There was a stamping of feet on board the big schooner, a confusion of orders, and the

vessel shot into the wind. She had just missed sending the dory to the bottom. The jibs flapped briskly in the breeze as she came up, and a figure leaning far over the rail cried out, —

“What’s that? Who’s there?”

“Two boys,” answered Hal.

“And a pup-yup-yup!” added Trot.

“We’ve drifted!” said Non, appealingly.

“From where?”

“Marblehead.”

“Why don’t you hurry up and row there?”

“We have n’t any oars. Do come for us.”

“What’s the matter?”

The deep voice of a new comer on deck was heard.

“Two young fellers adrift thar in somf’n! Got no oars. Guess thar’s a pup-critter with ’em,” answered one of the men. “We come very near runnin’ ’em down.”

“Heave that starb’rd dory overboard!

What are you about there? Jump in, two of you! Shoot her up in the wind!"

The captain lost no time in giving and executing these delightful orders. Two men jumped quickly. In experienced hands the vessel's dory found the other deftly. The boys were easily transferred into a very fishy boat, which struck them as the sweetest craft they had ever seen. A dozen willing hands lowered the tackle and hoisted their dory on deck. The captain himself, distinguished by no gold braid, but by a very crumpled white linen shirt, helped the boys out. Trot repaid this kindness by biting at one of the captain's hands enthusiastically, and got a good-natured cuff on the head for his courtesy.

The first observation which was made by any one came from one of the sailors.

"What shall we do with this dory? It's a good 'un."

"Let her tow till morning," answered the master, curtly.

Hal said nothing. He felt too much confused to speak. The captain and the men surrounded the strange lads on the raised deck aft. A lantern was flashed before them. Everybody rushed to inspect the new catch.

"You're pretty young to be foolin' with the Atlantic ocean," said one gray fisherman, shaking his head solemnly. "Wher' d' ye belong?"

"Marblehead," said Non, quickly.

"Do you think you can get us back there before breakfast?" asked Hal, looking from one to the other.

What a queer, yet good-hearted lot of men they were! They reminded him of the two friends that Phin had brought on board for the race. The crew of the fisherman looked at one another.

"Git back?" said one, meditatively.

"Let's tell 'em," said another, gravely.

"They ought to know. You, Capt'n!"

“I should like to go back before Mother and Father find out,” Hal went on. “My mother is dreadfully afraid of yachting. She will die if she hears.”

The fishermen looked at one another for the second time, but not one spoke.

“You don’t understand, perhaps,” quavered Hal. “You see, we’ve *got* to get back. If you knew my mother, you would see it’s as I say. She’s worse about yachting than anybody you ever saw. She and I — you see — ”

Hal’s voice trembled and broke.

“My lads,” interrupted the captain, laying one hand on each boy’s arm, “you see you can’t get back to-day, nor yet to-morrow, nor the next day. We’re bound to the Grand Banks for a three months’ trip!”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WONDERFUL HAPPENS.

MR. and Mrs. Maynot sat at their breakfast. It was not a silent affair this morning. They had both returned home the night before, and they had not yet exhausted the topic uppermost in their hearts.

“You see, dear, it was all right while I was with them. The boys could n’t do anything reckless,” she said, looking up at her husband’s face; “but now that they have no one to look out for them,” she continued with a sigh, “I am afraid that they are in great danger.”

Mrs. Maynot did her best not to worry. Home seemed very dull to her since Hal was away. To do her justice, she repressed many a sigh and many a tear, trying cheer-

fully to argue herself out of her constitutional anxiety into the belief that this summer's yachting would not only bring Hal back a live boy, but a well one. But she could not explain to her husband how she felt in this matter. How can a woman, whose every nerve tingles with the nameless apprehension for a child, which her own heart can barely analyze, argue with a man? And yet Mrs. Maynot had an intuition that her husband concealed beneath a bluff manner a solicitude as keen as her own, though far better controlled; that he too looked at any moment for the letter or telegram that should announce disaster.

“At any rate,” observed Mr. Maynot, comfortingly, “they won't race again. There's one worry cut off. I sent that order for your sake, my dear. Personally, I was proud of the ‘Kittiewink's’ performance, of Phineas, and of the boys. That's the way to develop manliness!”

After the delivery of this bold sentiment, Mr. Maynot cautiously buried his head behind his morning paper.

“Do you think, my husband,” — this was the method of address which Mrs. Maynot adopted when she was especially severe, — “do you think that you will see your son alive again if you continue to approve of this wicked recklessness? I am surprised!”

Mrs. Maynot’s voice trembled at the end; an unobserved tear dropped into her coffee-cup. Before she could wipe away the traces on her cheek, a stamping of feet resounded through the hall, and without ceremony Dr. Plaster rushed into the breakfast room, his face broad with smiles.

“Back again? Delighted! I want to hear all about it. Haven’t a minute to spare; a case of measles this time. How is Harry? I know Non is all right; I don’t bother my head about him. Go right on eating!” The doctor rattled on, seating

himself on a chair and glancing keenly through his gold spectacles at Mrs. Maynot. She was about to answer when the doctor interrupted her.

“Yes, yes! of course they are safe and well. You stole a march on the boys, I warrant. What a fine affair that race was! How proud you must be of your son, Mrs. Maynot! You let them be! They will get on under Phin famously. My prescription works like a charm, you see. I am proud of it, and of the boys too!”

How long the exuberant doctor would have gone on in praise of the boat, the skipper, the captain, and his own son no one can say; but a violent ring at the door-bell interrupted him. Mr. Maynot left the room to answer the summons. Very soon he came back, his face ashy pale.

Mrs. Maynot gave one look, and then a scream. “Has it come? Tell me everything! Tell me the worst!”

Without a word he handed her the telegram he had just received. Although the



message had been correctly sent, in Phin's handwriting it was spelled as follows:—

Bois and Dory disapiered ; ores found Ashor.
A Hunderd Men serchin rocks. Five Nets ar
draging Harbor. Marblehead Yatsmen hav or-
dered a Serch under Greshham. Come, Or telle-
graf, imejitly.

PHINEAS SCROD.

When Hal and Non had been told by the captain of the Grand Banks fisherman that

they were bound on a trip to the Banks, they did not at once grasp the full meaning of the words. They looked from face to face in the group upon the deck. How far away were the Grand Banks? How long did "a trip" last? Why did not the men simply turn the schooner about, and take the boys back to their own harbor and the "Kittiewink"?

"But are n't you going to take us back, Captain?" Hal's tone expressed great surprise.

Some of the men said that the captain ought to take them back. There was a good deal of talk about it on deck. One good-natured fellow pleaded with the captain.

"We might land 'em in Gloucester, sir. 'T won't lose us a great many hours."

But the captain of the "Samuel T. Woodburn" was also three-quarters owner of this one-hundred-and-twenty-ton Banker, and a

few hours might mean to him a two days' slant of favorable wind, a quicker trip, and better shares. When a fisherman once starts on a trip, he allows nothing to interfere with it or him. The captain shook his head.

“Here, young ’uns! Go down in the cud. You’re safer here than ye be on shore. It’s enough I’ve saved your bones from bein’ picked by dog-fish. You’ll have to go with us until we meet something that’ll take you back, or until we fetch up to Newfoundland for bait. We’ll treat you first-rate, an’ your mother won’t know ye when ye get back.”

The captain meant well. He could hardly understand what agony he was inflicting upon the parents of these reckless and luckless lads. As long as they were alive, he reasoned, where was the harm? The accumulation of anguish, the terrible nights and days, the tortures of suspense, — these

did not count with the skipper and owner of the great Banker. He was a kindly man, like the majority of his class ; but he, unlike many of his kind, did not know how to be tender.

“Go below, me lads ! ” he said authoritatively. “I’ve done all I can for ye.”

Lantern in hand, one of the crew led the way below. The sickening odor of fish, bilge-water, and stale salt smote the boys as they approached the companion-way. Hal had begun to waver between the desire to get home and the fascination of a new adventure ; but this unbearable odor instantly dispelled the romance. Non broke his silence. He stopped and whispered a word to his companion. Hal nodded.

“Look here,” says Hal, “we don’t want to go down there ! We want to go home ! You’ve *got* to take us ! My father will pay you for the time you lose, — if you’re mean enough for that.”

The vessel was headed out toward the wide sea. Behind them Marblehead light blinked farewell. The men gathered around the boys. One of them ventured to urge the case.

"I guess he's good for it, Cap'n. Eastern P'int aint more'n nine knot to go. You could land 'em on the rocks there."

"Land us anywhere! Please do!" said Non.

But the captain looked doubtfully at the lad. "Will your dad pay me for my hull trip if I go out of my way to land you two?"

Hal, not knowing that a successful trip of fish was sometimes worth ten thousand dollars, answered emphatically: "Of course he will!"

"Will your dad pay me three thousand dollars for my share to set you on shore?"

The men grinned. Hal was silent.

"I guess you had better go below then, and make yourself to home."

“I won’t go!” Hal’s anger was roused. He felt that the captain was deeply wronging them.

Non came to Hal’s side and took his hand. Trot, who was now in his master’s arms, snarled viciously at the captain, who cuffed him with his big hand and said, —

“Shet up, you pup!” for lack of better argument.

This did not soothe Hal. “We won’t go down in that dirty hole!” Hal exclaimed. “You ought to take us ashore. You know you ought. My father will have you arrested for kidnapping us. You’re laughing at us about the money. Oh, *put us ashore!*”

Hal’s threatening voice gave way to this humble wail, and Trot, taking the mood, joined in with a lugubrious howl. The captain laughed aloud. “You’ll do!” he said. “Now stow away your jaw, and turn in!”

A few of the crew laughed too; but most of them were sympathetic. But they knew

that it would hardly pay to try to turn their skipper when he had once made up his mind.

“You’d better turn in,” said the man who had interceded for them. “Perhaps we’ll meet a boat to-morrow a-runnin’ in with a full fare, an’ we’ll put you aboard. You’re all right. It’s no use to look so white about the gills.”

“Oh, thank you!” said Hal, tremulously.

The boys went below, and took what cheerless comfort they could. A wide bunk had been prepared for them, where they could sleep together. As they left the deck a head-wind sprang up; a foggy northeaster had set in, to hinder the passage of the “Woodburn.” It was as if the elements entered their protest against this cruel proceeding.

Hal and Non turned in sadly. Of what use was further appeal? Like the crew, they threw themselves into their hard bunk,

and tried to sleep. It was impossible. The cabin light bobbed here and there, smoking, flaring, and rattling. The beams creaked; the wind moaned above them. The nightmare was capped by the blasts of the fog-horn, blown at irregular intervals above during this first long night. The sails flapped, men tramped the decks, and muffled oaths penetrated below. Several times the boys thought the boat had been run into, and marvelled how the crew could sleep so soundly and snore so loudly. The thick fog swept down the open companion-way, and the dampness chilled them to the bone.

At the first struggle of dawn, the boys, clasping each other, fell into a fitful doze from sheer exhaustion. During the day their distress increased. Non could not get on deck; he was too sick. The monotonous fog, the head-wind, the choppy sea, the impatient captain, the ceaseless toot of that anxious

horn, their distance from home, — these and many other distresses combined to make the two more miserable even than when they were adrift in the dory.

The morning of the second day brought a clear sky. With a horizon in view came hope ; but the day brought no sight of land. It was their first experience of the immensity of the waters. The boys were very unhappy. They felt that they were cut off from home and all the world. Trot kissed their faces assiduously ; but they refused to be comforted.

Before breakfast a sail hove in sight ; but after coming nearer it stood off to the westward. During the whole morning the boys scanned the horizon intently. The sailors now began to share their eagerness. Seamen are superstitious, and it had been remarked that bad weather had come with the two lads. The captain was as ready as the rest now to be rid of them. So much was in

their favor. Toward noon they sighted another vessel.

"She 's in from the Banks!" cried one.

"She 's the 'Fredony,'" said another, "bound to Gloucester."

"No, she belongs daown East," insisted a third.

Each man clung to his opinion. Presently Crumpy, the sailor who had been kind to the boys, and who had kept quite still, keenly watching the advancing vessel, said slowly: "She 's a seiner, *she* is, with a full trip o' mackerel from Nova Scotia."

The two fishing-schooners rolled toward each other. It did not take long for them to close together. The boys eyed the seiner with beating hearts. When the black stranger was quite near, there was a flurry on board the "Woodburn" which the boys could not understand. A flag had been hoisted on the mast of the seiner. It stopped and fluttered half-way up.

"How many did you lose?" was the first question from the captain of the "Woodburn."

"Two, off the bow while a-reefin'."

The answer came mournfully, and there was a pause, but not a long one. The next question meant business.

"How many bar'l?"

"Two hundred A No. One, off Halifax."

"Where are you bound?"

"Gloucester."

At this answer Hal was about to shriek, "Take us there!" when Crumpy restrained him. "You jest wait! The skipper 'll fix it all right."

"I want you to take two kids in I picked up a-driftin' out to Kingdom Come," said the captain.

"Send 'em aboard all-fired quick, then. There 's six of 'em a-comin' after me. I've got to make the market first. Fish is skarse now."

Before they knew what had happened, the boys were bundled overboard in a dory. Their own was given them to tow. The good-bys were scant; only Crumpy leaned over the rail and called, "Good luck to ye, little shipmates!"

Hal was too much confused to answer, but he waved his cap. Afterwards he remembered that he did not even thank Crumpy; but at that moment he remembered nothing except that he was on a great mackerel schooner, homeward bound. The revulsion of feeling when they were actually speeding toward the land was intense. Hal and Non, very quiet, and feeling queer about the eyes and throat, took a long farewell look at the ship that had saved them. There was a fascination in seeing her spread her gray sails, and bear away toward an unknown fate without them.

It did not take the boys long to find out that they had fallen into good hands. A

crew who have lost two shipmates at sea are apt to be considerate, and a captain with a big haul is very likely to be good-natured. Then, too, it was thought to be good luck to return home with the same number as that with which they had started out.

The next morning the boys awoke with land in sight. Time flew as merrily as the schooner. It was not yet noon. The vessel, with all canvas set in order to make Gloucester before night, was bowling along at an eight-knot gait, and now and then sending the spray over her weather bow. The boys, who were lying flat by the sharp prow, and who had ducked for the twentieth time to escape a shower-bath, espied directly in their course a little boat at a distance rising and falling in the choppy sea.

“Is she a yacht?” asked Non.

One of the crew gave a critical look, and answered that it was no yacht, but probably

a "hand-liner off the rocks;" which meant that the boat's business was fishing in shoal, rocky bottom for cod.

"It's a fishing-boat," said Hal, uneasily, "built like — Non! she *is* built like the 'Kittiewink.'"

Non nodded sadly, but Hal was not satisfied. An unlikely thought came to him. He ran up and down the deck, and even climbed a little up the tarred rigging to get a better view. His first impression deepened into conviction, then into certainty. Hal ran to the captain excitedly.

"Isn't that the 'Kittiewink,' Captain?" asked the boy. He forgot that his insignificant boat was not the best known vessel on the coast.

"The Kittie *who?*" exclaimed the bewildered skipper.

"The 'Kittiewink.' It *is* the 'Kittiewink'! It's my boat! I'm captain of her. It's the 'Kittiewink — wink! wink!'"

Hal yelled for joy. "It's Scrod at the helm!"

"Scrod!" jeered a sailor, "I guess it's Halibut or Porpus!"

Non now caught the fever. The "Kittiewink!" — there was the familiar Chinese bow, and the mast stepped far forward. There was the same patch on her mainsail. And when Trot, unassisted, climbed on top of the rail, and barked and yelped at the black sloop as if he were greeting his long-lost brother, there was no longer any doubt about it, — it *was* the "Kittiewink"!

"But how came the 'Kittiewink' here?" Non demanded.

"I'm sure I don't know —"

"Ahoy there! Is that the 'Mollyblink'?" bawled the captain.

"Ay, ay!" screamed a well-known voice. "Have you seen two boys an' a dory an' a squeakin' pup anywheres?"

“Luff up there, Cap’n Codfish! Look here! Are these them?”

The captain and crew were almost as much excited as the boys. What a wonderful meeting!

“Oh, Phin, we’re safe!” called Non.

“Luff her up! Bear away there! Down with the helm! Ease the main-sheet! Haul in on the jib! Throw out the anchor! Why didn’t you hoist the absent flag? Take us aboard!”

Hal glibly gave these preposterous orders to show that he and his were at last one. Nothing more was needed to prove his identity.

Phineas looked at the boys, and seemed to be dazed. He rubbed his hand over his forehead. “Be I a-dreamin’ or a-dyin’?” he said, too low for the boys to hear; “be them *my* boys?”

Hal and Non could only see his lips move.

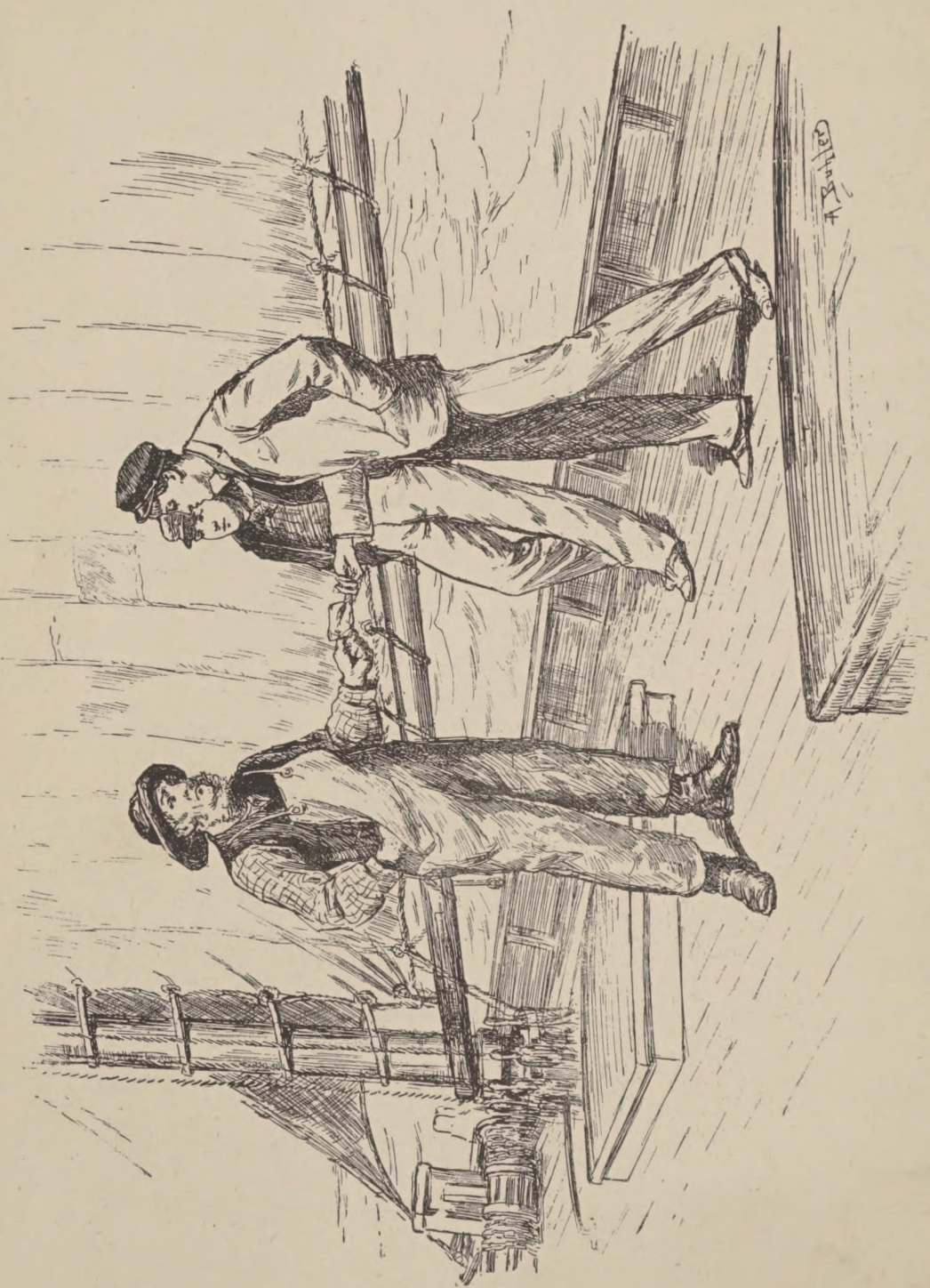
“Hurry up, Phin! Make the jib-sheets fast!” called Hal, impatiently and importantly.

“I guess that’s you. Now I kin face your father!” Phin Scrod trembled from his shaggy head to his great boots. His mate, Black Tarr, the Grand Banker from Marblehead, had to come and take the wheel from him.

“He’s nigh tuckered out. Don’t mind him,” said Black Tarr, apologetically, “you see we’d given ye up!”

“But how in the world did you get here?” demanded Hal, half an hour after. The mackerel-schooner was now bowling along toward Gloucester under full sail. The boys and Trot were snuggling together on the deck of the “Kittiewink,” leaning against the boom of their own main-sail, the happiest creatures afloat on the Atlantic.

Phineas Scrod looked Hal solemnly in the



SCROD SHOWS HIS ORDERS — PAGE 281.

eye. "I don't think he meant to hurt me," said the skipper, slowly, "but he did. Them's the orders on which the 'Kittiewink' set out to s'arch fur two lost boys on the Atlantic ocean."

Phineas handed to Hal a soiled and crumpled telegram, dated on the day after the disaster:—

To Phineas Scrod, yacht Kittiewink, Marblehead, Mass.

On receipt of this, start to sea. Search for boys. I have lost faith in you.

H. MAYNOT.

"But he come himself," added Phineas; "that was the worst ov't. And *she* come. I had to face 'em both. He chartered a steam-tug an' put to sea to hunt ye up of his own account. Go Gresham went along of him, to help look for ye. He got ahead of me. He's in Portland, nigh as I can reckon. But *she* took to the Atlantic coast."

“What?” cried Hal. “My mother took to — what?”

“The Atlantic coast,” replied Phineas, without a smile. “She’s just s’archin’ the coast of New England, that woman is. But she’s ashore. She’s a-settin’ on rocks an’ look’n out to sea for ye. Ye may pick her up anywheres,” said Phin, soberly. “I’m sure I dunno whar she is now.”

CHAPTER XV.

PHINEAS AND THE CAPTAIN.

IMAGINE a tidal river, thirty feet wide at its mouth, emptying into the Atlantic; imagine this river almost shallow enough at its outlet at low tide to swamp a rowboat, and deep enough when the tide is full to float a three-master; imagine the waters rushing one way or the other at a whirlpool rate at the mouth of this river, as the tide comes or goes. It has often taken a sail-boat in a fair wind two hours to run fifty feet in the face of this tide. Imagine a long stone pier reaching out into the tumultuous ocean, and beside it a tide-rip with white breakers gleaming like tigers' teeth. In stormy weather these are impassable by one who does not ride them at the right moment, or

who is ignorant of the channel. Here, too, are foam-tossed ledges, some of them above the high-water mark, some below; some marked by a black buoy, some not marked at all; but all dreaded alike by the mariner. Add to all this an easterly wind and an angry sea, and you have Pennylunkport Harbor as it was on the morning that Phin Scrod found his lost captain and his mate Non.

The "Kittiewink" was off Cape Porpoise, scudding before the wind, trying with all her might to make shore somewhere, in some way, and more quickly than she had ever done before.

"'T aint no use to make for anywhere but Pennylunk. The tide's a-goin'. We can fetch Pennylunk, an' jog a bit until it comes, an' run in an' telegraph to yer folks."

So said Phineas, hopefully. He was quite as impatient to land as the boys were. He

took in the lay of the wind, and at the same time gave what might be called an hysterical laugh. He was almost beside himself for joy. Non was not so exuberant, for he was still sea-sick ; but Hal performed what he thought was a sailor's hornpipe upon the cock-pit floor, and immediately asked to take the wheel.

“Not yet, sonny,” answered the cautious sailing-master. “This is a purty stiff bit o’ wind, and Pennylunk is a harbor to steer clear on, unless you’ve been there, as I’ve been with many a bar’l of herrin’.”

“But how soon can we send off the telegram ?”

Hal's anxiety to relieve his mother's distress had begun to take definite and urgent shapes. Love, after all, descends rather than ascends, and thoughtfulness is not expected of a lad who is wild for adventures. Hal was a considerate boy, but the continual round of excitement had, for a time, taken

his mind off Sweet Fern and the dear ones there.

But while his parents had been worrying, Hal had been growing much better in health. Doctor Plaster was right. The change worked wonders in the few weeks. One way to get well is not to talk about the disease. This Hal could not do on board the boat, nor would the rest of his party endure it. A better way is to forget the disease entirely. Self-consciousness in sickness is often worse than the illness itself. Forget Hal did; and although he was not yet strong, he was now likely to become so. The yachting season had only begun. What would it not do for him by the end of the summer?

But a new thought had troubled his mind; it had even suggested itself to the skipper. Non, too, had secretly shared it, and without regret. After all that had happened, would Mrs. Maynot allow Hal to set

foot on the "Kittiewink" again, if he once safely got ashore? One could not blame the poor woman if she did take the firm stand and say, "My husband, it *must* be as I wish!"

Hal thought of this possibility sadly. This might be his last sail. He made up his mind to enjoy it to the fullest extent while it lasted.

The "Kittiewink" had now skirted the shore until the long pier at Pennylunkport was well in sight. The summer cottages and hotels were so near that people walking on the shore could be seen, and women distinguished from men. A high sea was running. The waves curled and snapped at the bar of the river. When the tide is low, as it was at the moment when the "Kittiewink" approached it, the water breaks with a roar along the whole outlet which goes by the name of a harbor. The rocks stood out in bare relief off the shore, and the white-

caps played like fairy feathers with the dark green reefs.

In windy weather the summer visitors like to walk the length of their pier. Some fish for cunners at its end in the deep rock bottom, but even that sport gives way to interest, and often to anxiety, when a strange sail makes for the narrow channel under the stone breastwork. Many a native fisherman, with frantic gestures, warns the stranger who attempts the impossible entrance at low tide. One such mariner was greatly relieved when the "Kittiewink" presently stood off from the harbor and began to "jog;" that is, carried her jib to windward and her helm up.

"Why don't you run right in?" asked Hal, impatiently. "We can't wait here. I must telegraph right away."

"We've got to jog about here a couple of hours, until the tide'll serve us. There aint five feet of water there now," said Phineas, serenely.

He resolutely kept the "Kittiewink" on her course until she came to breakers ahead, and then brought her about to jog on the other tack. Hal stood beside him, and impatiently made fast the jib-sheets at the skipper's orders. The boy was nervous and irritable. His wonderful escape had not so much sobered as exhausted him. Though he had gained so much in bodily health, his nerves had undergone a long strain. This condition took its lowest form on this occasion, and made him unreasonable, ungrateful, and fretful at the very moment when he might have been expected to be humble, gentle, and patient. It occurred to him suddenly that where he ought to command he was made to obey. He felt what he considered the indignity of his position. The title of "Captain," so dear to him, was an open mockery. As he became more conscious of his nautical ignorance, he felt angry that Phin, uneducated Phin, Phin the gardener,

whom his father could buy out a hundred times, and who had always treated him so respectfully at home, — that Phineas Scrod should lord it over him in this peremptory way just because they were in a boat, — and *his* boat, too! A desperate idea took possession of Hal's brain. Phineas and he were alone on deck. Black Tarr, Non, and Trot were below, preparing dinner.

“Say, Phin,” said Hal, in his sweetest tones, “let me take the wheel while you go down and hurry up dinner.”

But the “Kittiewink” was in a dangerous position. On the one side were the shore and the impassable channel; on the other, reefs over which the choppy sea was continually breaking. Phin had made up his mind not to risk the boys' lives again. So he answered firmly, —

“No, Hal. You can't take the wheel now. Wait till she's safe in at the wharf. Then ye can play with it.”

It was not easy jogging, for the wind blew almost as heavily as it did on the day of the race. It was increasing with the tide. Phin Scrod was exercising his best caution and seamanship; but if the wind were rising, Hal's temper had done more, — it had risen.

“Look here, Phin!” Hal spoke hotly. “Whose boat *is* this?”

Phin turned quizzically. He had not found it an easy task to manage the boys and the boat too. He allowed some time to pass before he ventured an answer to this easy question. Hal watched him sullenly, and broke out again, —

“But I want to get in! I want to telegraph Mother right away! Do you hear? Right away!”

In the boy's mind his design seemed praiseworthy, and his mutiny appeared to him to be filial devotion. The delusion was very subtle, and mirages of conscience like it are

very common. Hal steadied himself by the companion-way. False pride and duty, lawlessness and obedience, were confounded in his heart.

“But it’s *my* boat, not his!” kept running through his mind. “I’m captain; I will do as I please! He’s keeping Mother in agony.”

He began to disregard the tide, the harbor, and the wind. He had now lashed himself blindly to the point of believing that Phin was simply delaying the boat in order to exercise his authority. Should his father’s gardener treat him like a baby? Such preposterous questions as this flitted through the black grotto of his boyish mind, like bats through a dark cave.

The sailing-master answered the lad’s first question, slowly, —

“It aint *your* boat. It’s your dad’s, an’ he put me here as skipper to look arter it an’ you; an’ I’ll do it, even if I have to go

to Davy Jones's locker for it. I've got into one scrape; ye don't ketch me in another."

This reasonable reply stung Hal. "We'll see if it is n't my boat!" he shouted.

Hal sprang to the wheel, with a quick motion wrenched it from the unprepared skipper, and with one turn spun the "Kittiewink" around.

Phineas Scrod, with a mighty oath, the first he had ever uttered in the presence of his employer's son, jumped for the wheel and the jib-sheet in one bound. But it was too late. A side flaw caught the long boom, and swung the main-sail from one side of the boat to the other. A high wave swung the "Kittiewink" away from the wind. Then the gale caught the long boom again. In nautical terms, the sail "jibed," and did so with a shock that shook the whole boat. There was a crash, and a sound of splintering wood. The main boom broke in two in the middle. In an instant the gaff above,

unable to stand the strain upon it, snapped. The main-sail slapped here and there in the gale, an utter wreck.

Hal was aghast at the result of his mad impulse. No worse accident could have happened to the "Kittiewink." Phineas said not a word. He made a dash at the anchor to let it out. As he sprang forward, the irresponsible main-sail thrust upon him like an enemy, and the broken boom felled him to the deck.

By this time the two below had rushed above. The little dog came barking after them. The splintered boom tore here and there, and threatened to knock every occupant of the disabled boat overboard. The skipper's order came distinctly above the dreadful confusion, —

"Pay out that road for your life!"

By this time Black Tarr was working forward of the mast. The bow of the "Kittiewink" heaved up and down like a

prancing broncho. At every dip, Scrod was half-buried in the waves, and his mate was drenched in the spray. Hal and Non crouched in the cock-pit in shivering terror. They did not know what to expect.

“Does she hold?” yelled Scrod to his mate, indicating the anchor.

“Ay! Ay!”

There was a sudden wrench, as if some huge monster had grasped the “Kittiewink” from beneath; then a trembling and an upward leap.

“The Lord save us!” cried Scrod; “she’s snapped like a pipe-stem. Down with that hellum thar!”

Neither of the boys had the strength to obey. Hal stared at the scene vacantly. Non could only grasp the spokes for support. Black Tarr made a leap for the cock-pit. The slatting boom struck him down. He rolled over, and fell heavily into the cock-pit. It occurred to Hal, in a vague

way, that the man was dead; but Tarr shook himself like a water-spaniel, grasped the wheel, and hauled in on the fluttering jib-sheet. Scrod now let the throat and peak halyards go as best he could. The main-sail fell reluctantly. Before them were the reefs. If they could gather headway with the jib, and escape these, they might beach the boat on the sandy shore. The "Kittiewink," as if ashamed of her previous performance, now answered nobly to her rudder.

Phineas Scrod had managed to get safely to the stern. He had made the main-sheet fast, so that the boom at that end could not knock about. He now busied himself with untying the painter that held the dory. He had not yet spoken to the boys. But there was an angry look, more terrible than scolding, about his mouth. The "Kittiewink" now bade fair to make the course of the river. If there were only water enough,

and she could weather the tide-rip, she might perhaps be saved.

Crowds by this time surged on the shore. Hal gazed stupidly at the land, coming rapidly nearer, and then at Phin's mate at the wheel. He saw that the boat was staggering towards the sandy side of the river's mouth opposite the pier. He felt as if he were watching a panorama in the Town Hall at Sweet Fern. He heard Trot whine, with a dull idea that it would interrupt the performance. Nevertheless, he expected to be drowned. He felt that it would be the righteous consequence of his crazy deed. The events of the summer's yachting danced before his eyes in startling vividness. What a failure it had all been! The thought of his parents' suffering filled his head. Then, there was his friend. If they were lost, Non's death would be upon his head. The burden was more than he could bear. Mechanically he pushed Trot away from him,

and the dog fell yelping into the flooded cock-pit. Non stooped and picked him up, and both looked at Hal reproachfully. Hal staggered to his feet. He had but one impulse,—to throw himself overboard. Perhaps, in some strange way, his life might expiate his fault,—might save the rest.

Phin was watching their course steadily. It was exceedingly doubtful if a thirteen-foot dory could stand the tide-rip. He was seeking to decide—and the decision must be made instantly—whether to stick to the boat, and trust it to be cast high on shore, with a chance of rescue by the people on the beach, or forsake the “Kittiewink” at the last moment, and make for the mouth of the river in the dory, trusting to Heaven to take them safely through the breakers at the bar. Scrod misunderstood Hal’s movement. He thought the boy meant to get into the dory.

“I don’t know but you’re right this time,”

he shouted. "Ketch hold o' this painter while I get 'em in! Look sharp!"

Hal obeyed promptly. A new idea shot through his head, as desperate as those which had gone before it. He would help them all in, then shove off the dory and perish with the ship. That was a fit sacrifice! In his excitement, he remembered that all captains do that. Hal was almost elated at the thought of enacting this tragedy; and the worst of the matter was that the delirious boy was very much in earnest. He had made up his mind to inflict his own sentence for his rashness, and serve it out. He was the sheriff and the prisoner, the judge and the victim. What heroic fools boys can be when they are hard put to it! His heart grew big at this plan. He felt that the country would applaud his thrilling heroism, and that his parents would be quite reconciled to so glorious a death.

There was no time to be lost. The

“Kittiewink” was already dangerously near the shore. Non threw Trot into the dory, and followed as best he could. Phin’s mate got in, and grasped the oars, to be ready when they shoved off.

“Jump in!” yelled Scrod to Hal, who was holding the dory’s bow, so that it should not be shattered by the “Kittiewink.”

“You first; I’ll sit in the bow!”

There was something in Hal’s wild eyes that Phineas did not trust.

“Hurry up there! Haint you done enough for one day? Git in, or I’ll heave you!”

Phin took Hal firmly by the arm. At the touch Hal sprang back.

“Let me alone! I’ll stay here to the death!”

There was almost no time at all. The roar of the breakers was upon them. If the little dory should be caught in these, who could escape? With a hot cry, and hotter

words, Phin grasped his captain. All the suppleness, agility, and strength of the old fisherman's youth returned at this supreme moment. He twined his arms about the slender lad, lifted him, in spite of the unsteady rocking of the boat, and threw him into the dory.

Hal fell upon a thwart that gave way opportunely, and sank between Non and the sailor at the bottom of the boat, in what, under less sober circumstances, would have been a ridiculous collapse. He had also fallen upon Trot, who howled at the top of his lungs with fright and pain.

In the confusion of this scene Phineas had forgotten that Hal held the painter that bound the dory to the "Kittiewink." It was too late for the gallant skipper to follow. The dory, impelled by the shock and a wave, was too far for a leap.

The opportunity of rescue had passed for Phineas Scrod.

“Keep off!” he cried. “Keep off for your lives!”

His old dory mate saw that it was useless to try to save the skipper. All he could do was to back water with all his might. There was a crunching and grating, a cry of horror from the shore, a splash of waters, and the “Kittiewink,” with Phineas on board, was rolled over by the breakers and hidden by a cloud of impenetrable spray.

CHAPTER XVI.

WRECK AND RESCUE.

“STEADY there! She’s comin’!”

This exclamation from Black Tarr, who stood stolidly in the dory, brought Non to his senses.

Indeed, there was the greatest need of steadiness. Hal looked up from the bottom of the dory, but as he did so, the end of a curling wave from the chop sea struck him full in the face, and for the moment blinded him. The elements seemed to be conspiring to the bitter end against the captain of the “Kittiewink.”

The dory was now in the middle of the seething waves. Could it pass the white line of breakers at the bar, or not? The man at the oars kept the boat in its position

as firmly as he could hold it. He knew well that every third wave was the one to be dreaded. He was measuring the billows and awaiting his opportunity.

“Bail her out, quick!” he shouted to Hal, who was still crumpled up like a sheet of paper in the bottom of the dory, and thoroughly demoralized.

Black Tarr thrust his oilskin hat into Hal’s hands. Hal took the sou’wester, and he was not long in finding out what to do. The sea was swashing from side to side in the gallant dory, and Hal swashed with it. He bailed with all his might with the sou’wester.

“Now hold to her! Don’t let go! *Ugh!*”

There was a roar, a mass of white-green foam, a dead weight, a staggering, a manful pull, and the deed was done; but with what slight margin! Beyond was still water, and willing hands dragged the half-swamped but victorious dory to the firm land. A

wave had almost filled her. Hal was struck down for the third time by its force. He thought all was over then, and blindly clung to the seat. Non had shut his eyes. He, too, expected to die. The three were pulled ashore with joyful cries. Trot got out, no one knew how ; but there might well have been a lurking suspicion in his mind that no one thought of him in that crisis.

Hal staggered up the beach a few steps, and then fell exhausted. His legs could not carry him. But Black Tarr shook himself like a Newfoundland, and rushed along the shore toward the "Kittiewink." Hal seemed at first to be seriously hurt. Ladies bent over him as he was borne up upon the high, dry sand, and Non walked trembling by his side. Trot followed, shivering and silent.

But how fared it with Phineas Scrod ? Phineas was a man of quick expedients, and when he saw that his own shipwreck was

inevitable, he plunged into the cabin to reach for something heavy. He knew that if, in a lull, he could get a line to the shore, before the crushing waves exhausted him, he might be saved. Groping about, his fingers closed upon the soapstone with the iron handle, which Mrs. Maynot had insisted that Hal should take to keep him warm at night. There was no time for a choice. Like a cat Phin was on deck, and had time to cling to the mast with both arms before the onslaught of waters struck the "Kittiewink." The wave enveloped the doomed boat, turning her over on her side. Phineas for the moment was completely submerged. What muscle and courage he needed to clasp the mast, as the terrible wave fell back! The waterfall of pebbles on the beach resounded in his ears. He clung to the mast like a barnacle. Half entangled in the rigging, he had not a fair chance to jump. Besides, the water was too deep, the rush of

the returning wave too quick, the undertow too deadly. Again the surge of the breakers overwhelmed him. A few more such onsets, and even tough old Phineas Scrod must yield.

Phin thought that he must go now. He wished it had been on the "Susan Jinks," and not here. But he was not ashamed of his fate. "Anyhow," he muttered to himself, "I found my boys." The receding mass of waters almost tore him away from the mast; but, with a coolness worthy of high admiration, Phin, even while under the wave, and maintaining his grip, tied the long end of the jib-halyards to the handle of the soapstone. When the sea left him for the space of a few seconds, the brave fellow landed the precious stone on shore with a mighty throw. Some one grasped it. Again came the shock of the sea. For the third time he was overwhelmed; the fury of the rising tide was added to the torrents. This

onslaught drove the "Kittiewink" higher on the beach ; at the same time it nearly stripped her. The tremendous wave receded, the white surf fell back and gathered itself anew with gnashing teeth. Had it accomplished its awful purpose ?

Slowly Scrod emerged. He was badly bruised ; but the saving rope was taut, held at one end by straining arms on the beach, at the other by the pin at the saddle of the mast. Phineas, with a prayer that bears no earthly record, scrambled out. It was a desperate risk. The "Kittiewink," creaking and groaning, was left alone to its doom.

Phineas hung upon the quivering rope. He had only a few feet to swing himself along ; but the weight of the waters had been almost more than he could bear. He was a resolved but exhausted man. The roll of the returning surf, the boiling of the sea at his waist, the murmuring sands, the



PHIN LOSES THE ROPE. — PAGE 309.

cry of the horror-stricken people almost within reach, stunned the old sailor as he braved his fate. There was a surge and a rush, a singing as of distant music in his ears, and Phineas was twisted from the rope and sucked into the seething water.

“Seize him ! Grab him !” shrieked a terrible voice.

A wild man flung himself into the white foam. He grappled with it, and grasped a dark object mightily. Was it a senseless wreck or a breathing man ? From the shore it was impossible to tell. Then the fisherman was seen to turn a white, streaming face to the land. A line of strong men had already been formed. There was a desperate and magnificent pull. Then the waters, as if rebuked by a Divine hand, fell back.

Thus was Phineas Scrod saved by his mate !

When the half-drowned and unconscious

man was carried upon the shore and laid down, some of the bystanders wished to roll him over a barrel, and some to stand him on his head, while one scientific summer boarder whipped out a "Guide for all Emergencies," and opening at the wrong page, wildly prescribed chalk and milk for the sake of precipitating the salt water, and thereby saving him from the convulsions of poisoning.

It was reserved for Trot to be equal to the occasion. With anxious whines he forced his way through the crowd and cuddled at the limp man's face, licking eyes and ears and mouth with a warm tongue and piteous cries. This method of treatment for drowning, not prescribed in any medical treatise, caused Phin to open his eyes with a low groan. Trot, encouraged by success, redoubled his attentions, snapping spitefully at any interference.

Scrod, after a few minutes of hazy remembrance, rose on his right elbow. He cast an

intelligent look about him and recognized the dog. His first words were, —

“ *Where’s your master ?* ” Then he asked, “ Are them boys safe ? Save them boys ! ”

The crowd were deeply touched. Some one’s voice was heard in a half sob. The people parted, and a tall boy tottered before the prostrate sailor and fell upon his knees in the sand.

“ O Phin ! ” cried Hal, with streaming eyes, “ dear Phin ! Thank God you ’re saved ! Forgive me, Phin ! I ’ll never do so any more. I ’ll never be captain in all my life again ! ”

Phin looked at his employer’s son, and held out his hand. What could he say ? What had he to say ? With his hand he gave his heart again, and if need had been, his life.

Seeing Non looking scared in the crowd, Phineas beckoned to him. It seemed to the bystanders like a sacred family meeting.

Black Tarr, with an ingrained sense of delicacy, had stepped back when Hal appeared.

“I’m glad my boys are safe. Now we can go home in peace. Whar’s my mate?” asked Phineas. “I know *he*’s safe. Nothin’ can’t drown him.”

“Here he is, — he saved you!” called out a voice from the crowd.

The stolid old fisherman was shoved to the front, still dripping, and with sand clinging to his wet clothes. His head was bare. He had a look upon his face such as simple heroes wear. He was ashamed of his prominence.

“No, I didn’t,” he stammered; “that is — we all hauled you in; but you saved yourself more’n we saved ye. Can’t some un give ye a dry bit o’ clothes?” He looked around, and then lifted Phin carefully to his feet.

This practical point relieved the strain.

The crowd closed upon them, and Phineas was carried off to one of the hotels in triumph. Hal followed with Trot a little way, and then turned back to the sea and the "Kittiewink." He was now able to walk and think calmly. Many people were still watching to see the surf pound the boat to pieces. The beach was beginning to be strewn with jetsam.

Hal looked at the wreck with a feeling very much like glee. He was sorry that the boat was destroyed, but not that he had come to the end of his boating. His foot struck a hard substance. He stooped and picked up — his mother's soapstone. The saving rope had been untied. Hal did not think it strange that the soapstone should be there. He had come to feel no wonder at anything the sea might do.

A small boy picked up a can of tomatoes cast up on the beach, and with great honesty brought it to Hal.

“Is that yourn?” asked the small boy.

“Yes,” said Hal. He mechanically put the can under his arm.

The tide had almost come, and with it a still higher wind and sea. As Hal watched, a wave taller than the rest struck the ill-fated sloop. There was a tearing of wood; the mast was wrenched out of her body, and, entangled in sails and rigging, was carried on the crest of the breaker to the beach. The yacht yawned before him and drifted apart.

At this sight Hal drew a deep breath, and turned his back forever on the “Kittiewink.” With his soapstone swaying in one hand, his can of tomatoes in the other, Trot rolling in the sand to dry himself, and the honest small boy behind, Hal followed the crowd as best he might. He now began to think of the telegram, and of his anxious mother. Somehow, he thought that his father could stand the uncertainty, but his mother — might she not die under the ner-

vous strain? Hal ran on as fast as he could.

A quarter of an hour afterward, when some one had kindly ferried the shipwrecked boy and the terrier over the river into the town, Hal walked up to the telegraph office, which was situated in a large white hotel. The men in the hall, who seemed to be staring in two ways, as if after two curiosities, withdrew their divided gaze and centred it upon our dilapidated hero. The operator seemed to expect him. He had just sent two surprising messages; but of these Hal knew nothing. The first of the two was written in a very scrawly hand with the usual atrocious telegraph-office pen, and was much blotted by the blue ink:—

to mister Henry maynot. Steamtug Sculpin, anywhere on the new Englend cost. try Portland:

i found um. we Go hum to-morrer in fust Trane. Kittiewink druv eshore.

PHINEAS SCROD.

“But how can the Western Union deliver this message? Isn’t its destination a little vague?” the operator had suggested, mildly. He was only too willing to do all he could for the interesting waifs.

“Thet’s the comp’ny’s business,” said Phineas, composedly. “You send that off, young fellow, right away, and mark it paid. Here’s two quarters, all I hev.”

The operator started it off; and, stranger than all the strange events of that day, Mr. Maynot received the message before sundown in Portland Harbor, where the discouraged “Sculpin” had run in for the night.

The next message was written in a precise hand.

To Dr. Plaster, Sweet Fern, Mass :

Don’t worry. Saved by Phin and sailor. Phin saved by sailor and others. Kittiewink not saved at all. All well.

ALGERNON.

Hal took the pen with trembling fingers, and wrote nervously, —

To Mr. and Mrs. Maynot, Sweet Fern, Mass :

Kittiewink gone to thunder. Phin is a brick. Telegraph money, shoes, and clothes immediately. We're all busted. Tell Mother it's all right. I'm coming right home for good. We'll start by early morning train. I guess I'm not fit to be captain of anything. The only thing saved is Trot and us and the soapstone.

Very lovingly your son,

HAL.

This remarkable telegram was marked "collect." It was Hal's first telegram, and he was not in a frame of mind for counting words.

Trot acted as if he wanted to send a message too; but the operator could not translate the canine vocabulary into Morse's alphabet. Perhaps he lacked a common-pup education.

Now, while Hal was at the telegraph office, Non went to the desk and occupied himself with the hotel register. He turned the leaves with idle interest, then sud-

denly stopped. A low exclamation of delight escaped the boy. His finger rested upon the name of Miss Louise Concord.

“How long has Miss Concord been here?” he demanded rapidly of the clerk. “I’d like to send my card to her—to her chaperone, I mean,” he added, remembering that he was in a fashionable hotel.

“Went yesterday!” replied the clerk, promptly.

“Went?”

“Yes; the young lady’s party have gone.”

“Gone!” repeated Non, helplessly.

“They went on the afternoon train,” added the clerk, with a snap in his voice which seemed to say, “Why should n’t they?”

Non felt that he was staring, not to say acting, like a fool; and he turned away from the desk to hide his chagrin. “Bad enough to be shipwrecked,” muttered the boy; “but

not a girl aboard all summer, — that's a little too much!"

That lovely girl had eluded him just so, during his short yachting experience, like a mermaid in a breaker. He did not tell Hal for some days; he was too much disappointed to talk about it.

About sunset that night Hal went out alone to the long pier. He had meant to take another look at the wreck. The evening train had brought many strange faces to the hotels and boarding-houses. Hal was diverted by the sight of the tourists, and for the moment forgot the errand on which he had come out. As he was looking about, his eye caught sight of a lonely figure sitting on the rocks, eagerly watching the ocean. Something about the lady seemed familiar to him. He approached her timidly. The woman's travelling dress was dusty and disordered, and her face was haggard. Her eyes stared straight out upon the waters.

It was his mother; "searching the Atlantic Ocean," as Phineas had said.

Hal stood still. He was afraid to speak to her; but Trot, without any hesitation, bounded into her lap, and said enough for all three.







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